



NEVADA LEGISLATURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF THE TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY AND MARLETTE LAKE WATER SYSTEM

(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218E.555)

DRAFT MINUTES May 3, 2024

The third meeting of the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System for the 2023–2024 Interim was held on Friday, May 3, 2024, at 1 p.m. in the Trepp Room, Donald W. Reynolds Community Nonprofit Center, 948 Incline Way, Incline Village, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's meeting page. The audio recording may also be found at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/>. Copies of the audio record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) (publications@lcb.state.nv.us or 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN INCLINE VILLAGE:

Senator Skip Daly, Chair
Senator Melanie Scheible
Senator Robin L. Titus
Assemblyman Ken Gray (Alternate for Assemblyman Rich DeLong)

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENT VIA ZOOM

Assemblywoman Shannon Bilbray-Axelrod, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Rich DeLong (Excused)
Assemblywoman Angie Taylor (Excused)

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Alysa M. Keller, Senior Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division
Christina Harper, Manager of Research Policy Assistants, Research Division
Erin Sturdivant, Senior Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Jeffrey Chronister, Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

*Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.
[Indicate a summary of comments.]*

AGENDA ITEM I—CALL TO ORDER

Chair Daly:

[Chair Daly called the meeting to order, and welcomed members, presenters, and the public to the third meeting of the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System.]

I would like to thank the Parasol Foundation for allowing the Committee to hold its meeting at this location today. Today the Committee will be receiving presentations mainly focused on sustainable recreation and housing issues in the Tahoe Basin. We will be receiving a presentation from the City of South Lake Tahoe—welcome to them—regarding issues, concerns, and priorities in the Basin.

Will the Secretary please call the roll? [Roll call is reflected in Committee Members Present.]

Before we get started there, housekeeping announcements. First, we would like to reiterate that as stated previously, the general plan for main topics of the meetings were: the first meeting was our Committee overview, and the second meeting was focused on transportation issues.

[Chair Daly reviewed meeting and testimony guidelines.]

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Daly:

We will move on to public comment, limited to two minutes. Please proceed when you are ready.

Kristina Hill, Tahoe Area Group of the Sierra Club:

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) has changed. I used to be a huge supporter of the Agency; working there as a Shore Zone Planner for four years in the 1980s when it was rooted in environmental science. Now, leadership that was once made up of environmental scientists are now public relations experts. This was never more evident than the recently adopted TRPA code amendments that permitted 65-foot tall buildings, unlimited density, and 100 percent land coverage. The important required findings were not prepared for the code amendments that will forever alter the character of the Tahoe Basin. In addition, many of the TRPA Board Members are on several other boards that do not make Tahoe's environmental quality their priority including the Prosperity Center, the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD), the Tahoe Transportation Committee, and the North Tahoe Transportation Management Association Board. Being on these other boards is a conflict of interest. These other agencies are focused on economics of the region, not Tahoe's pristine water quality. They are interested in creating more density in town centers with little or no parking, and therefore need buses to provide transportation; and that is where government funding seems to be easiest to obtain—transportation. Now, there are microplastics in our drinking water. Thank goodness, the application of herbicides in the Tahoe Keys has been stopped. On behalf of the Sierra Club, of which I am on the Board, we are against TRPA's new policies, attracting more visitors and against TRPA's latest plan to urbanize the Lake. As the TRPA Oversight Committee, please consider cutting all funding

to the TRPA as the Agency is undeserving and the environment, as well as the taxpayers, would be better off without their growth inducing policies. Please, for the sake of the Lake. Thank you.

Jean M. Diaz, Executive Director, Saint Joseph Community Land Trust:

Good afternoon. We are in Zephyr Cove, Nevada. Our Mission is to create and preserve affordable housing in the Tahoe Basin; housing for workers in health care, the first responders, the people who work in the resorts and restaurants, and the retail businesses that support everybody who is living here in the Basin. Preserving and enhancing the Basin's environment requires a holistic approach. You have to look at all of the factors that impact the environment, and providing a range of housing for the people who work here is an important aspect of looking at environmental impacts. We very much support the efforts of the TRPA and also the City of South Lake Tahoe, who are here as well. In terms of looking for ways to provide in a safe, meaningful, considerate way, affordable housing for the people who work here and live here. Thank you.

Kyle Davis, League to Save Lake Tahoe:

Thank you Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. The League to Save Lake Tahoe is an environmental advocacy organization. We work on a number of different projects in the Tahoe Basin, and have been working to protect the Lake for many, many years. It concerns me when I hear phrases like, we should cut the funding to TRPA. Our organization has always been a strong supporter of the Tahoe Planning Compact and the two states working together to protect the Tahoe Basin. And the idea that we would cut the funding to the one Agency that is responsible for doing that is concerning to us. We certainly have some concerns about the way that TRPA does things from time to time. We think that enforcement and compliance could be improved. We certainly want to see more funding for transportation, but we are doing that by working with everybody on these programs, working with the Agency, working with the other agencies in the Basin, and working with the private sector in order to try to make these projects happen. What we are hearing right now is really distracting TRPA from really doing their job of actually making these projects happen; getting better transportation, improving the built environment. We are certainly here to do our part as a nonprofit. We have programs dealing with litter. We have funded transportation pilots; we work for funding for the Basin. And we certainly are not afraid to advocate for these things and to call it out when we see things happening that we do not agree with. But we think the more productive thing we can do is really work with TRPA and the other agencies in the Basin in order to improve Tahoe's environment. Thank you.

Aaron Vanderpool, Nevada Resident:

I would ask you to please be very skeptical of all these presentations and organizations that are speaking to you. They are assembled in large part by public relations (PR) and marketing experts. They are filled with so much unscientific rubbish, and misconceptions, and greenwashing. I am appalled by many of the reports and presentations of patting themselves on the back for ridiculous things. It is a full-time job just to refute all this stuff. It was for such as transportation, miles, vehicle miles driven. The second of three things I would like to speak about is speaking of a full-time job to refute it at all. I wish you would allow someone from the public, at least one person, to give a presentation to you all, because there is a huge group of very well informed citizens that are here and probably have not made it yet today, but there is a huge group. They are all on the same page, and I am sure they would nominate somebody to speak on their behalf. Please give the public a

real voice to refute a lot of the stuff behind the presentations you are getting. And the third thing is, I clearly do not have enough time to address so much of this rubbish, but I can leave you with one thought; all the trails, and amenities, and campgrounds, and developments going in around the East Shore and around Tahoe are bringing millions more people here and into the forest. That is a huge increase in risk in fire and more pollution. Think about all the people concerned about fire right now. It would be a really sad tragedy if somebody started a fire and burnt down Carson City, our State's Capital right down the hill from here. This summer is sure to be another record setting, hot and dry summer, in the trend we are seeing of increased fire risk. Tahoe does not have a problem needing more tourists for the economy. It has an over-tourism problem. Do not be fooled by these presentations. They are not creating stuff to meet this demand or solve any of these problems. They are only bringing more people here without really solving the problem. This is unsustainable and making things worse.

Doug Flaherty, Tahoe Clean Air.org:

Honorable Chair Daly and Members of the Committee. Many believe a public vote of no confidence in the TRPA is now in order in connection with TRPA's pro-growth, pro-developer, and pro-international destination, recreation project approvals this additionally, in connection with the failure to prevent and reduce microplastic, algae, aquatic invasive species, and human overcapacity crisis, and manipulating threshold language entertainment dates to avoid accountability. The Lake Tahoe Basin is out of harmony and out of equilibrium. Today, you will hear presentations that fall woefully short of providing any subsidy data whatsoever connected to what really matters, which is the benchmark Lake clarity and environmental threshold results. The TRPA's current direction will barely move the needle, if at all, with regard to increased workforce housing availability or Lake clarity improvement, and will only jeopardize public safety in connection with increased human capacity within town center choke points and recreation areas, which could easily lead to loss of life during wildfire evacuation. This lack of confidence that TRPA has been played out recently with the filing of two lawsuits connected with the area plan and code ordinance changes that were approved upon TRPA's finding of no significant environmental effect. This utilizing the TRPA sham desktop environmental checklist, which consistently circumvents comprehensive cumulative environmental analysis. Last week's court ruling in favor of the Sierra Club in connection with the Tahoe Keys herbicide use further demonstrated TRPA ineptness, as they bent over backward to approve the three-year test. These lawsuits have been joined by a constant barrage of local, state, and international news articles driven by TRPA's mismanagement. Finally, please give the public the expanded time at a future Oversight Committee to fully explain our concerns and provide recommendations. Two minute comments are simply not enough. Thank you so much. (Agenda Item II A)

Pamela Tsigdinos, Full-time Nevada Lake Tahoe Resident:

I am a full-time Nevada Tahoe resident who like many residents look to you, our Legislators, to provide independent oversight. I respectfully ask you to invite independent environmental scientists and public safety experts to present at future meetings. They can provide much needed missing environmental impact data. So far, we have heard predominantly from TRPA partner organizations; Destination Stewardship and Tahoe Prosperity are on today's schedule. They are paid representatives from tourism, developer, and telecom industries; most of you already met and dined with earlier today during TRPA's latest private tour—so much for public transparency. Today's presenters are here purely for monetary, not environmental reasons. Make no mistake, they are funded by real estate investment development and corporate interests. They want to influence policy to benefit their bottom line. Their goal is not to preserve and protect Lake Tahoe. It is to

monetize and exploit it. I know how they operate. I made my career in the corporate, private equity world. What Lake Tahoe needs today is protection, not exploitation. You sit on the only Agency charged with overseeing Tahoe's environment, public safety, and water quality. Please focus on Lake Tahoe and its environment as I requested in my latest Nevada Current column. Lake Tahoe's health and the Basin's public safety depend on your objective, independent oversight. Thank you. (Agenda Item II B)

Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance:

Good afternoon, I continue to be extremely concerned about the coziness of this Committee and the TRPA; it plans out every agenda. I do not know how you can consider yourselves providing oversight. And I am really troubled that today, for the second time, you had a cozy tour with doughnuts, coffee, and beignets with the TRPA. You did not inform the public. It should have been on your agenda. It should have told the public that you were going on this tour. You should have mentioned the locations, and on March 8th you did the same thing. You had a cozy agenda. You had a tour. There was communication between staff and the TRPA about allowing the public to go. You chose not to, it is illegal. Your minutes should not be approved today. The minutes should reflect from March 8th that you went on a tour, where you went, what was said, you were all together; that is an open meeting law violation, potentially; at the very least you need to clean up your act. You are not doing right by the public. Thank you. (Agenda Item II C)

Judith Michael Simon, Crystal Bay Resident:

Hello, I would just like to raise a couple of points. One is, I think that you need to keep to the forefront the mission of the TRPA, which is to preserve, restore, and enhance our beautiful Lake. So I think that one approach that you might consider is you do have several Nevadans who serve on the TRPA Board, and you might seek some input or knowledge from them. They range—well I have their names, but you probably have their names, and if I have time I will read them into the record. I think that one thing, one lesson that you might want to look at is the control methods test that was recently—it was approved by TRPA. It was approved first by the Lahontan Water Board. There were pages and pages of cautionary testimony not to do that by scientists, and our own Water Suppliers Association was also against the herbicides in the Lake. Nevertheless, the bodies decided that they could do this. So hopefully this decision from the Sierra Club lawsuit will prevent them from again, trying to put herbicides in our Lake in the third year of the controlled methods test. It was important in this that they ask the right questions, and we almost had a battle of the dueling scientists, including the advocate for the Tahoe Keys Property Association that was in favor of the herbicides and then our own scientists from TRPA.

Chair Daly:

If you have more comments, you can submit them in writing, but we are going to keep it moving. Whoever is next.

Peggy Bourland, South Lake Tahoe Resident:

Good afternoon, Committee. I have lived in the City of South Lake Tahoe since 1972. The City does not have a flawless environmental track record. The most glaring example is our unfinished redevelopment project that goes back to the 1990s. The third phase started 20 years ago, and today is an unsightly concrete and rebar unfinished construction site where a convention center and hundreds of lodging units were planned. As a condition of this redevelopment, the TRPA required a fully functioning transportation system to address the vehicle miles traveled. That transportation system was never delivered; much like the

bus service that was a condition to the Events Center was never finished or provided. In both cases, the TRPA failed to follow through with those conditions. And today, the TTD's public transportation on the South Shore is a failure. Our City is taking steps to reimagine our transportation delivery, and is the only jurisdiction in the Basin that has banned single-use plastic bags and water bottles. Further in 2018, the citizens of South Lake Tahoe brought a ballot initiative to ban vacation home rentals (VHRs) in residential neighborhoods; 1,400 VHRs were phased out, and today our neighborhoods are occupied by residents and second homeowners—not tourists. The TRPA has publicly recognized the City for their plastic and VHR bans, but has not taken the lead to extend these policies around the Lake. These are missed opportunities by the TRPA, as microplastics are polluting the Lake, and over tourism is compounded by the 6,000 remaining vacation rentals in the Basin. Thank you.

Alex Dennison, Longtime North Lake Tahoe Resident:

Given my scant 120 seconds, I will dive right in. If you feel your oversight, meeting agendas, the tours you take, and the people and organizations you meet with; those who are given much longer than 120 seconds of your time are cherry picked. If inside our conversations and private phone calls, you have heard Tahoe residents characterized as “noisy or crazy nimbys who are just a vocal minority,” to minimize the voices of the constituents you are elected to represent. If you find you are being steered to believe the only legitimate voices are those of people, lawyers, lobbyists, organizations, including those formed as nonprofits with benevolent sounding names whose primary interests are commercial development, growing tourism, and related tax revenues, et cetera. If you are not considering the irony that TRPA, an agency first and foremost founded to be an environmental watchdog is being taken to court by environmental organizations for the policies it pursues. If you are not hearing or asking hard questions about urban planning models wedged into a rural environment, regulatory capture, the issues of growing over-tourism and congestion, microplastics, and trash in the Lake and Basin. And if you are only hearing of policies designed to get more people into the Basin and little of how to get them out in a wildfire evacuation, then I hope you see the same red flags, I and so many of us who live in the Basin do. And you should share the fear that your function of oversight risks being hijacked and jeopardized; and that would be most disappointing. Thank you.

Elisabeth Lernhardt, Zephyr Cove Resident:

Good afternoon, our Honorable Chairperson and Honorable Committee. First, I would like to address the statement of Director Regan last time; she said that the Bi-State Compact does not state that road expansions is allowed. It is. I read it and reread it. I challenge her to show me where she got this opinion. All it states is that alternative transportation is preferred, if feasible. The new Round Hill parking lot, the Sand Harbor bike trail, and the planned Zephyr Cove parking lot and road development in Zephyr Cove are clearly contradicting that statement. In 2023, Tahoe Environmental Research Center presented a breakthrough in the limnology of Lake Tahoe. A rapid improvement of visibility and clarity of the Lake from the recent trends around 60 feet or less than 80 in one year. This could be traced to a dramatic change in the zooplankton. The invasive Mysis shrimp population had collapsed to a fungus infestation of its main food source resulting in a resurgence of the native zooplankton—daphnia; one of these organisms acts as a cleanup crew by ingesting and condensing debris in the Lake to make it sink to the bottom—TRPA immediately claimed victory for his policies. Professor Schladow the Director of the Tahoe Environmental Research Center (TERC) retired, and University of Nevada Reno (UNR) Professor Sundeep Chandra declared in the RGJ, that food chain and micro plankton was not the cause of the improved clarity. Consensus amongst his colleagues was his reasoning over empiric data of

TERC. This made him the scientist to follow the human food chain. Thank you.
(Agenda Item II D-1) (Agenda Item II D-2)

Ronda D. Tycer, Incline Village Resident:

I am a 34-year resident of Incline Village. I think it is safe to assume you Legislators do not intend to read through the several 100 pages of submitted comments from the past two meetings. So, I have created a five-page summary that will take just a few minutes for you to read. You will see that our concerns are general about TRPA's seeming switch in emphasis from protecting the Tahoe environment to protecting and promoting economic development. Residents agree we need regulated development, but the problem seems to be one of emphasis. I know we all have limited bandwidth, so I have summarized the public comments and then sorted them into categories, so they are easily readable. You will see that some topics are mentioned more than others, which gives you some indication of what we are most concerned about. The topics with the most comments were of course first development with eight comments, and another specifically for housing. Another comment concerned TRPA's problem of being reliant on funds tied to new urbanism and smart growth instead of the environment. Next were 12 comments related to TRPA's lack of public representation and ignoring public input. There were five comments pertaining to emergency evacuation and wildfires, and five comments were concerned with environmental thresholds and TRPA's use of outdated threshold data from 2012 when making developmental decisions. I do not have time to go through the other ten comment categories, but I thank you for taking time to read the summary of our comments. I am sure it will be well worth it. (Agenda Item II E)

Helen Neff, Incline Village Resident:

As a victim of a pedestrian crash while crossing State Route 28 in a crosswalk in Incline Village, my concern is safer roads for all. I support Take Care Tahoe's campaign to take it slow, Tahoe. I appreciate TRPA's support in distributing 1,000 yard signs last summer. Clearly, the campaign struck a chord with residents. I also appreciate the dedication and hard work of the TRPA transportation planners on Vision Zero and Safety. However, I am learning it is easy for the TRPA's Governing Board to endorse safety plans with resolutions, but then pivot and approve code changes and development projects with a litany of excuses as to why they cannot implement road safety as part of development. Please consider the following, as you listen to the presentations today. How will Destination Stewardship provide transit for day visitors to park cars outside the Basin? How are traffic safety and vehicles miles driven (VMD) being addressed? Where are the transit options? Where is the wildfire emergency plan for day visitors? Why is Nevada State Parks giving TTD \$85,000 each year towards operating the East Shore Express then allowing those riders to enter Sand Harbor for free adding to the overuse of the park? When will the reservation system be implemented? It is long overdue. Why are the TRPA housing amendments eliminating parking requirements for affordable housing? Our workforce includes house cleaners, landscapers, service workers who need their vehicles to transport their tools and get from job-to-job yet, we are building parking lots for visitors. This is not equitable planning, and it penalizes our workforce. The City of South Lake Tahoe's recent approval of cannabis consumption lounges with a weak, one sentence public transportation plan for impaired drivers, or employees subject to secondhand smoke is a red flag for traffic safety. There is no court approved test for impairment.

Chair Daly:

If you have more, you can submit it in writing. Thank you.

Richard Minor, Incline Village Resident:

I am a 26-year resident of Incline Village. Through public records request we learned that both the agenda for this Committee's meetings and also the specific topics and speakers for each are recommended to the Chair by the Government Affairs Manager of the TRPA. Given the resources available to the Committee, this may seem appropriate, but it potentially undermines the supposed oversight with which this Committee is vested. Indeed, the duties of the Committee as specified in the NRS include not only the review and oversight of the TRPA, but specifically reviewing the budget programs, activities, responsiveness, and accountability of the Agency to, "Achieve the goals set forth in the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact." Have any of you read that lately? So far allowing the Agency to set the agenda and provide spokespeople has resulted in a succession of PowerPoint dog and pony shows that apparently address only those issues the TRPA wants you to consider. Of some 65 concerns raised by Nevada residents in previous meetings, none have been picked up for subsequent meeting agenda items or presentations. This distressing fact troubles those of us who feel the TRPA has not been held accountable by the governments of either California nor Nevada as specified in the Bi-State Compact. This list of topics already raised here has been submitted to you for the record. I will close with, but two critical examples requiring your attention. Number one, the failure to update and so far to even attain most of the TRPA's mandated environmental threshold carrying capacities in the Basin, and two the short-term rental use; supposed residents have more information.

Chair Daly:

That was two minutes, if you have more information, you can submit it to our staff.

Mr. Minor:

Thank you for your attention.

Yolanda Knaak, Incline Village Resident:

First of all, the TRPA is not focusing on cleaning the trash, plastics, microplastics, and lead wires from our Lake. My water bill last August said that there is now microplastics in my water. Before Tahoe Basin urbanizes, which they have already voted for 900 units in the Basin, we should focus on safe evacuation in case of a wildfire. If you have been sitting here today, what if there were a wildfire? Do you think you could get out with our little two-lane roads safely? The Caldor Fire caused a mess. South Lake Tahoe took days to evacuate and if it was a South Lake Tahoe fire—thousands would have been killed. Incline Village evacuation plans, which I have been complaining about, and they are working on it, but they are based on 2010 numbers, and it did not include visitors. So, you know, several cities in the Basin have been compared to the Paradise Fire and the Maui Fire. And also expecting employees to put down 20 percent on this urbanized housing is unrealistic; realistic housing for workforce would be rentals. And of course, the TRPA does the opposite. They took downtown Incline Village and changed the zoning to luxury condos, you know, and then they turn around and say, "oh well now we need workforce housing." where it was also zoned for apartments. Now, they can come in and put in multimillion dollar condos all through our city. Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Thank you, you are at your two minutes.

Unidentified Public, Incline Village Resident:

I am a full-time resident here in Incline Village, and I just want to make three short points. The first is as many have said, we believe in—many of us believe in Incline Village that TRPA has strayed from its ultimate mission of environment and protecting the Lake, specifically concerns about wildfire safety and evacuation, and now microplastics in our drinking water here in North Tahoe. These are issues that we are concerned that the Agency is overly influenced by those entities with financial interests in development. You have heard that. That is obvious here. Second, many residents are concerned about workforce housing. This is not a nimby issue. We are concerned, but our concern is that the zoning changes that TRPA and Washoe County have supported are flawed and will not ultimately work. They are encouraging high-end development at the expense of workforce housing and especially rental housing. So please listen to our comments when we submit them in writing to you for these meetings. That is a message for TRPA; message for you as an Oversight Committee. Finally, I have sat here, I organize—personally I organize Democrats in this community. I know who is from which political party. This is a nonpartisan, bipartisan, all political stripes, speaking to you today about our concerns about TRPA, and our Lake, and our environment. So please take it in with that in mind. Thank you.

Laura Koscki, South Lake Tahoe Forest District:

You took an oath to protect the *Constitution*. You have failed. The Oversight Committee has failed, and is shown to be compromised—aiding and abetting the TRPA. [Governor] Newsom signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), a license to burn us out. It was an intentional burnout. Then you allowed the installment of the 5G cellular towers, which is a smart city. It is crimes against humanity. They patent the graphene oxide, which is the poison and the vaccination which is activated by 5G towers, satellites, and drones; children have seizures now in our town at the hospital, many deaths around the Lake. Basically it is about control, surveillance, not about Internet speed. On the ten Senators' watch here, federal, state Compact laws have been violated, badges of fraud upon our residents. I am for term limits now, forced resignation when you violate the *Constitution*, building laws, and environmental laws. We have had ten gang bangers fighting within three days in our town; guns coming into McDonald's; as well as the salon in the last three days, and this has been going on. Twenty car pileups; this has happened during the winter; now we had two separate ones. No one is doing anything about sanding, or making sure the \$100 million that you gave to paving the roads is not being done; and, we are having blowouts, wrecks because of this, and emergency vehicles cannot handle all the boats going up on the Lake, with the electrical vehicles (EVs),—not alone, Zephyr Cove; and 41 bears being hit is a high volume on July 4th. So those are my concerns. And, if you continue to play operation ignore, then you know, I will knock on every door in this State. Thank you.

Niobe Burden Austere, Tahoe Vista Property Owner and Conservation Photographer:

Thank you, Honorable Committee for being here today and listening to our concerns. I hope that you will take them seriously. The TRPA currently is on the defense to mold projects for economic vitality rather than what they should be doing is having a request for projects (RFP) out there stating what is needed. Capacity is a huge issue, which has not fully been studied and understood. Request for projects should be created that meets the environmental goals, the community concerns, and sustainable development goals including the standards that need to be met and incentives that are included. I wish that the TRPA was on the trajectory of environmental protection, sustainable development, which is huge across the world at this point. And Lake Tahoe has that opportunity to lead by example,

rather than react. How have the concerns and questions of the public been addressed by the Nevada Legislative Committee? I have not seen anything. Do not exacerbate and continue the lack of public transparency that we so have had with the TRPA, and we want improvement with and be included as the community with these discussions. Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Seeing no further public comment here. Broadcasting, do we have anybody on the phone to provide public comment?

Broadcast and Production Services (BPS):

To provide public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue.

Melissa Soderston, Director, Tahoe Forests Matter:

Good afternoon, I am a 22-year resident of South Lake Tahoe, California. I am here today to talk about the disturbing thinning forest health fuel reduction projects going on in our forests. We recently toured a high intensity burn area within the Caldor Fire scar that has not been salvaged logged yet, and we found numerous woodpecker species nesting in the area. There were multiple pairs of breeding, black-backed woodpeckers, hairy woodpeckers. We heard on our recordings, a long-eared owl; there were warblers; there was a cowbird; there were numerous bird species; numerous chipmunks in the area. Recovery was actually coming on quite nicely. There were numerous tree seedlings growing. You could see where even the highly intense burned trees were storing so much water in them still that it was literally dripping down the bark and watering the area beneath the burned trees. These are incredibly important habitats, and yet the TRPA, as they do with everything else, has chosen to side with the Forest Service and become nothing more than an extraction, industrial-economy based entity. They are not for the environment. I would invite all of you to come out with me into the forest and to see what these sites actually look like after a fire; fire is a natural part of our western forests. It is actually essential for regeneration to occur. What we need instead is for the TRPA to demand that the Forest Service and others stop logging in our forests, and to instead focus on fire-wise practices like home hardening, home out defensible space, metal roofing, evacuation routes, higher pay for local fire departments, smoke centers; these are the things that are going to protect us in a climate changing future. It is rapidly changing now. We can do nothing to prevent that. It is because of our current—.

Chair Daly:

Thank you, you are at your two minutes. Next caller, please.

Ms. Soderston:

Thank you. That is not enough time.

Monica Eisenstecken, Private Citizen:

Tahoe is crying for help. I can see it and feel it. I am very disappointed that TRPA Oversight Committee will not meet with the public. Planning out your entire meetings behind closed doors is very unethical and unacceptable. We, the residents want our voices to be heard. This is our home. We feel that TRPA fails us completely. The TRPA has turned a blind eye to their number one mission of protecting the Lake. In fact, Lake Tahoe is deteriorating at a very rapid pace. The TRPA continues to blame others. The TRPA is directly responsible for

the contamination of our Lake. Throughout the years, they have issued permits for hundreds of docks that deteriorate and create dangerous microplastics. The TRPA approved several monopines that are up to 20,000 pounds of microplastics that shed annually and are impossible to pick up. This will end up in water runoff into streams and drains, and ending up in the Lake. Cell towers also emit dangerous microwaves that put our community's health at risk. You are directly exposing, poisoning our community; children, elderly, and disabled are the most vulnerable. Even the healthiest, strongest person can suffer. Wireless radiation is in every classroom. We have sent thousands of peer-reviewed studies that demonstrate the damage, but you do not even take the time to look at these. Do you think the community will be okay with your decisions when they find out the truth about the health effects? Trash is all over our public and private land. No one is holding businesses liable for picking up the trash. The message is clear, come to Tahoe and trash it. We do not care. We only care about the money. Tahoe is a toilet bowl for the tourists. I hike often to take pictures. Trash is on every side of the street, parking lot, and local businesses and in the forest. When we go to the beach, literally every step we take, you can see trash in the sand. Julie Regan says that TRPA picks up trash on her break. I have never seen anyone from TRPA. My oldest son said to me last summer, "Mom I can definitely notice the water clarity."

Chair Daly:

You are at your two minutes. Thank you. Next caller, please.

BPS:

Caller, please press *6 to unmute.

Robert, Resident of South Lake Tahoe:

I just want to echo everything that has been stated by everybody. Again, first off, appreciate Chairman Daly and all of the Committee. I believe this is the case of follow the money. If we only were in third place of the most polluted lakes in the world. I do not think Julie Regan or the League to Save Lake Tahoe. What I say is, where is the money from all those blue stickers that have been sold? Where is the money? I do not think you can be proud of third place of the most polluted lakes in the world. I also want to state, the Tahoe Fund—I read their gap analysis, some of the most racist statements are made from, I guess it would be Amy Berry and Art Chapman and everybody else who is a part of the Tahoe Fund. Some of the most racist statements about people in there saying that white, rich people are holding underprivileged and people of minorities from going and enjoying the Lake. That is the largest pile of you know what that I have ever heard; the Tahoe Fund is here trying to blanket the Lake. All of the people involved with them are all in bed together. All of these partnerships. It is the inbreed, and they are all a bunch of inbreeds. Everybody is back massaging everybody else. They are all getting paid. I would like to look, are their pensions being made here? And where is the money going? You cannot be proud about third place. And I want to just let everybody know that there is a lot of people out there that are very, very upset about this. So, you know, I think your decisions need to be made for the Lake and the clarity of the Lake, and the habitants around the Lake. As the other callers stated, our water is polluted. This is in your hands. Thank you.

Ellie Waller, Nevada Resident:

Existing conditions in Tahoe have changed significantly over 20 plus years and environmental impacts go unchecked. This needs to be remedied. More and more plans emerge with no required deliverables at what expense to the taxpayers and the federal

government. The 2012 Regional Plan TRPA needs to begin an update process, not seemingly endless amendments before an unelected Council calling themselves the Tahoe Destination Stewardship proceeds to provide and make recommendations with too many loopholes and inconsistencies in that plan. The TRPA is a Council member. In documentation, you will find stewardship funding feasibility that recommends plans to tax the public without a vote and secure funding for resources to manage the stewardship. This body of people calling themselves the Council are not elected or appointed like TRPA. Initially \$215,000 was collected and ministered by TRPA calling it an environmental improvement project. It is on the Lake Tahoe info site Project 4343. You should ask yourselves, why does the Tahoe Basin need another nonprofit or this Council? My opinion—this is TRPA's responsibility, not an unelected Council with no established government. What am I missing right now? Collaboration is one thing, but funding sources passed through is non-entity with no governments from many other entities is very confusing. Who do we redress when we have problems? Next, the increased use of adapted management is an inexplicable solution. It is a structured iterative process of decision making in the face of uncertainty, with an aim at reducing uncertainty over time using system monitoring. There are no deliverables. How much money? (Agenda Item II F-1) (Agenda Item II F-2)

Chair Daly:

Thank you, you are at your two minutes. Next caller.

BPS:

Thank you. If you have recently joined the call and would like to provide public comment, please press *9 now to take your place in the queue.

Chair, there are no more callers to provide public comment at this time.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. At this time, we will close public comment.

I wanted to go back to housekeeping. Our first meeting was an overview of the Committee. Our second meeting focused on transportation. Our third meeting, which is today, is mainly focused on sustainable recreation and housing issues. Our fourth meeting, not fully set yet, but we are going to hopefully have presentations on forest health, wildfire issues, and Marlette Lake Water System updates. The fifth meeting will focus on Lake health, environmental science, and related topics. Our sixth meeting will be our work session. I would like to remind everyone that the agenda—I work with staff, and get set by me. You want to be mad at somebody that is fine, be mad at me. We are trying to address and get to as many of the issues and questions as possible.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON MARCH 8, 2024

Chair Daly:

We are going to move on to the approval of the minutes. Everybody should have the minutes that were sent to them, and hopefully everyone had a chance to review them. I will take a motion for the approval of the minutes for the meeting on March 8, 2024.

SENATOR SCHEIBLE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETING ON MARCH 8, 2024.

SENATOR TITUS SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESENTATION BY THE TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY REGARDING THE LAKE TAHOE DESTINATION STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Chair Daly:

Next is a presentation by the TRPA regarding the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan. To present we have Devin and Nettie; proceed when you are ready.

Devin Middlebrook, Government Affairs Manager, TRPA:

Thank you, Chair for having us today in front of this Committee. I am joined today for this presentation by Nettie Pardue, Managing Director for the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan. Before we dive into the presentation, I want to set a framing of what Destination Stewardship is. Destination Stewardship is not about more visitors or less visitors, it is about working together across our landscape and our partnership of public and private entities to better manage and balance the visitation that we already have to ensure that access can be had for all to our public lands. And it is not just about visitors, it is also about our residents and everyone that goes out to the public lands and ensuring everyone can enjoy Tahoe. Destination Stewardship aims to create a more sustainable tourism and outdoor recreation economy that addresses many of the concerns you heard during the public comment today, and gives back to the community and supports a vibrant economy. You have heard at previous meetings, that we walked through, the various plans and mandates of our Agency and the hierarchy of those. Our role in recreation follows a similar framework.

Our Bi-State Compact calls for us to have a recreation plan for the region. Our threshold standards, or our environmental goals, refine this mandate to include two goals: (1) provide and achieve a high-quality recreation experience; and (2) ensure a fair share distribution of recreation access. Even in 1969, when our Agency was formed, fair share access to the public was of utmost priority. An example of this is public access to the Lake. We all love the shores of Lake Tahoe. In 1971, only 13.5 miles of Tahoe's 72-mile shoreline were in public ownership. Today that figure has doubled to almost 34 miles in public ownership. That is just one example of how we are increasing that fair share access to the Lake.

To implement our mandate and our threshold standards, the TRPA has a recreation element as part of our Regional Plan for the development, utilization, and management of those recreation resources in the region. But as we know at Tahoe, it is not just what our Plans say, it is what all of our partners together do. While we are responsible for implementation of our goals, we need to rely on our partners to achieve that. We support partners in recreation and destination stewardship through creation of the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan, which you will hear about; and the environmental improvements programs, sustainable recreation focused area, which you will hear in the next presentation from Nevada State Parks.

Finally, we use monitoring and adaptive management to make sure we are meeting our goals on a continuous, ongoing basis. We have partnered with the Tahoe Science Advisory Council, which is an organization of all of the great universities and scientific minds in the region to understand better what is going on in our recreation system, and how do we improve it.

(Agenda Item IV) [Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/About/Contact.>]

Destination stewardship is definitely the latest buzzword in the industry. Previously, it had been sustainable recreation, and now it is going towards destination stewardship. The Tahoe region has been moving in this direction for a number of years. In 2015, the region's land managers began to come together and discuss what sustainable recreation means for the region. At this time, we also launched the Take Care Tahoe campaign. This is a shared campaign where we have one simple unified message of what it means to be a good recreationist and a good steward of the lands while you are visiting the region. From there, we have continued to have these discussions and formed a sustainable recreation working group that began to identify areas of need in terms of access, litter management, transit, et cetera. Then in 2020, we all know what happened with the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. While many destinations around the globe were shut down and people could not fly to their international islands, et cetera; the guidance from public health officials was to go outside and enjoy the outdoors. For millions of people within a two-hour driving distance of Tahoe—that meant Tahoe. We definitely saw an increase in visitation in certain areas during that pandemic. But because we had this partnership already mobilized, we ended up having weekly calls for nearly three years with over 80 people to identify the impacts that increased visitation was having, and launched pilot programs to address them. This included expanded litter cleanups, expanded transit operations, and creation of a park ambassador program. There was a lot of success in these pilot projects, and we realized we needed a bigger, long-term strategic vision for the region's sustainable recreation and destination stewardship systems. So, from 2021 to 2023, partners across the region developed the Destination Stewardship Plan and launched it in June of last year. Since then, we have worked to establish the Destination Stewardship Council, and have begun working on implementing that plan.

This presentation is going to go through a lot of the nuts and bolts of how we went through this process, and what it means for the Lake. But I want to pause before we get into that and really talk about what does it mean for everyone's daily life when you are out recreating in Tahoe. What does this really mean for people? It means transit; it means transportation options—microtransit, which we have heard about at your last meeting. It is about microtransit and transit options to get people to the recreation sites; to get employees to the recreation businesses that need those employees to open. It is our awesome solar compacting trash cans that increase the capacity of our recreation sites to manage litter, and it is the Take Care Tahoe campaign, which I have already mentioned.

We went about this and really needed to create a new process. You have heard many times during this interim about the different organizations, groups, agencies, plans, and acronyms; but I can assure you when we embarked on creating a new table and a new process for Destination Stewardship, we thought long and hard—is this really needed? Do we need to create a new thing to tackle this problem? Ultimately, we decided we do, because for the first time ever, as you can see with the logos on the screen, we have our public land managers from the federal, state, local, and tribal level to our Destination Marketing and Management Organization. For the first time ever, our operational side of the

equation and our sales team, we are fully talking to each other and collaborating and coordinating. The logos along the top are the original 17-members of that Council. Since then, we have added 5 new members to that, including Nevada State Parks and the League to Save Lake Tahoe.

The first step this group took in developing the plan was to understand our recreation trends in the Basin. In 2022, visitors spent about \$4.5 billion in the region with more than \$10 billion total economic impact. This was about 2 million unique visitors spending 17 million days at Tahoe. We understand that the urban populations near us; the Bay area, Sacramento, and Reno are growing, projected about 27 percent in the next 20 years. That demand for outdoor recreation in the Tahoe region is not going to be going away, and there is a number of underlying trends to this system. As I mentioned, those marketing organizations whose jobs traditionally were to bring people to Tahoe—and you heard from several of them last meeting; they are now shifting to management, to better educate the visitors once they are here so they can be good recreationists—good stewards.

I mentioned the challenges with COVID-19. Moving forward, what are those changes that were brought by the pandemic of getting more people outdoors? What ones are here to stay, and which ones were just fleeting fads? Then finally with our current economic situation with inflation, a weaker economy, and extreme weather trends—how is that impacting visitation to the region?

Next, public engagement was a key part of this process. More than 3,000 people—including visitors, businesses, and local residents—provided input during this process. As you can see, we had surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and many workshops and core team meetings. We heard interesting things from this public engagement. From our residents—people love living in Tahoe; the quality of life was rated 4.5 out of 5. I think it is no surprise that we all love living at the Lake, and it is an awesome place, but there is something wrong. When you look deeper in the statistic, only 21 percent of residents agreed that the tourism and recreation system we currently have is supporting the quality of life and strong sense of community they want. People love working here and living here, but tourism is maybe detracting from that. This is one of those key statistics this plan really aims to change.

From our visitors, we also heard they want a destination to be an environmental steward; 88 percent of the visitors said an environmental stewardship ethos of the destination is important when they are making their visitor and travel choices. People want to know that where they are going to visit and spend their money is being a good steward of the environment. And 82 percent say they do their part to keep a destination clean when they visit. This statistic always gets head nods from the local residents who are used to the negative impacts of litter and trash, congestion, and loud noise from visitors. But really, we are trying to understand, is this an 80-20 rule; where it is 20 percent of our visitors that are not following the rules—that are not behaving? How do you create systems in place to reach that 20 percent of those visitors? I am now going to hand it over to Nettie Pardue to go through the rest of our presentation.

Nettie Pardue, Managing Director, Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council:

Hello, Committee Members, fellow presenters, and public. My job is to manage and advance the implementation of the goals of the Destination Stewardship Plan. I want to thank the Council Members, partners, and locals who have helped to create this robust plan that supports Lake Tahoe's future management. Next week at the sold out National Outdoor Recreation Conference, we will be in South Lake at the Tahoe Blue Center. Members of the

Council, we will be presenting to other land managers and recreation specialists from all over the country to talk about recreation, education, and stewardship. This is not uniquely a Tahoe problem. This is a problem that recreation places around the country are facing—even the world.

Here is the cover of our plan that you can download from our website. There is a 135 full page document which outlines the plan, and the 12-page executive summary—if you cannot get through the 135 pages. At the core of the Destination Stewardship Plan is a shared vision for Tahoe, which is a cherished place, welcoming to all; where people, communities, and nature benefit from a thriving tourism and recreation economy. This is the first time we have a shared vision across the Basin for recreation, stewardship, and the economy. There are four pillars that make up the vision statement. The first pillar is responsible for creating a structure or governance to support the implementation of the plan. The second pillar is fostering a tourism economy. Improving the Tahoe experience for all is the third pillar, which is the operational pillar. The fourth pillar is creating a culture of caring for the land, which is stewardship.

What does turning this plan into action look like? Turning a shared vision into action includes these actions: Council formation; hiring of a managing director—which is me; securing funding; and implementation of action teams, which we all have accomplished. We have accomplished all of these things in the first six to eight months of this plan. Our communication strategy kicks in gear close to the first of June, when we will launch our first newsletter, outlining how we can impact the Basin's summer. This diagram represents the structure of the Council and supporting action teams. You can see we have four action teams on the ground doing the work and reporting up to the Council. These action teams include folks from throughout the Basin. The Peak Demand Team includes folks from leadership from Vail Resorts and the City of South Lake Tahoe. The Recreation Infrastructure Team is led by members of the Tahoe Conservancy and Nevada State Parks. The Take Care Action Team is led by Noah Shapiro from the Tahoe Fund, and the Economic Team includes members from the Tahoe Prosperity Group. The structure of the model promotes collaboration and breaking down of silos across the Basin. The action teams bring needs back to the Council. They come from the people and the places; for instance, at one of our recent Peak Demand meetings, we had individuals across the Basin talking about what we need to do for the Fourth of July. We had law enforcement who helped us to identify high-need places, and together we realized we are going to stress the need for up to an additional 100 portable toilets (Porta-potties) across the Basin—some 20 toilets in 1 location alone. The Recreation Infrastructure Action Team has identified needs of Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility mats in certain beaches across the Basin.

This demonstrates the funding we have already received from government, private, and nonprofit partners. We have collectively raised \$330,000 in commitments for implementation of the plan, which includes staff time and a discretionary bucket that can be used for specific action teams projects and those are to be determined. We are starting to get proposals now from the action teams about needs for this Fourth of July.

What does Destination Stewardship look like this summer? Devin talked a little bit about it, but this plan is about action. I understand individuals' concerns about this not just being another plan around Tahoe and not taking action. Some of the actions include: a recent plastic water bottle ban in South Lake Tahoe; increased trash service; microtransit; ambassadors; trail etiquette and [inaudible] messaging; "Take Care" billboards; solar trash compactors; the League's Blue Crews; paid parking and reservations at Park Palisades Tahoe; and hopefully soon to be the Sand Harbor parking reservations. Recreation land managers are looking to inventory recreation projects, ensure ADA access at existing

recreational facilities, and to possibly pilot reopening the Visitor Center in Meyers for a limited period of time. Communications will continue to inform visitors of the expected behavior. Our Economic Action Team is exploring how to enable more entrepreneurship on public lands and supporting all businesses to participate. Because of this increased collaboration across the Basin, we will better amplify changes to manage visitors and increase the stewardship here. I will pass it back to Devin.

Mr. Middlebrook:

As we conclude our presentation, we want to bring it back to how this Committee can support our efforts here at Tahoe. As you heard last meeting and have heard today, transportation is a key destination stewardship need. Anything this Committee can do to support transportation is helpful. Second, support of Nevada outdoor recreation programs. I want to make sure we give credit to the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), their Tahoe Nevada team; and Nevada State Parks who you will hear from next and their environmental improvement programs. They are an amazing partner at the Lake. We also work very closely with the new Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation and ensure the goals and projects we are working on here at Tahoe fit into the bigger statewide recreation priorities.

There are also potential opportunities to expand economic development, entrepreneurship, and education in our public lands. We look forward to partnering with you and our University of Nevada Reno-Tahoe, as they expand to their Tahoe campus here in Incline Village. Finally, the State can potentially play a role in helping us reduce plastic, plastic trash, and litter at our recreation sites. Finally, recreational safety is important. Currently, there is a discrepancy between the Tahoe no wake zones on the Lake for paddler safety and the no wake zones in NRS. This Committee could support legislation to update that State law to conform or match with local regulations. We will turn it back to you, Chair, for Committee questions.

Chair Daly:

We will start with our Member that is on Zoom, and see if Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod has any questions.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Thank you, Chair. I appreciate the presentations. I am going to hold off on questions. I might have one, but I defer to the rest of the Committee initially.

Chair Daly:

Be sure to remind me if you do have a question, we will come back to you. Any other Members? Senator Titus.

Senator Titus:

Thank you, Mister Chair for the question. Devin, I appreciate the presentation, but I need to have more clarity on these numbers you have given us; I am trying to make sense of this. You talked about the Tahoe recreation trends, and then you listed underlying trends and there was an intentional shift towards managing, not just marketing. I am wondering who has shifted towards managing—are these marketing firms and the businesses that promote tourism here? Are they now not marketing as much? If they market, are they being

responsible about when they bring tourists here? At what point do we hold them accountable for over-marketing?

Mr. Middlebrook:

Yes, the shift from marketing to management, I am referring to our destination marketing organizations. You heard from the last meeting from the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, Tahoe Douglas Visitor Authority, and the Reno-Sparks Convention and Visitor Authority (RSCVA). There is also one based here in Incline Village, Travel North Tahoe Nevada; and then on the California side of the North Shore, the North Tahoe Community Alliance. The North Tahoe Community Alliance is a great example of how that type of organization is shifting from marketing to management. They restructured how their funding is sourced through a business improvement district. They have created a community grant program where they have invested back tourism dollars and tourism revenue into litter management and microtransit programs. It is not just them spending their money on marketing. Then on the marketing side, the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority on the South Shore is a great example of how you can shift your marketing dollars to still attract people here, but attract the right kind of person. No longer are people spending money to advertise to the Bay Area, because we know folks from the Bay Area are going to come up to Tahoe anyways. The Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority has shifted some of their advertising more to the Pacific Northwest, because we know those people like to go outside and enjoy nature. They like to shop local. They are more the type of visitor that meets the Tahoe mindset, they tend to stay longer, and spend more money. It is where you target that marketing to attract the right type of visitor, that is going to be a good steward of the land and be a good recreationist. Those organizations are making that shift themselves, because they are hearing from the public and hearing from the land managers that the old way of doing things is not working anymore. Those partners have been very willing to examine how they have done business and change that moving forward to be better stewards of the land and participate to achieve our goals.

Senator Titus:

What you just said to me—what I heard I think—is that they are not doing less marketing, they are marketing to different people; but they are still marketing.

Mr. Middlebrook:

There is still marketing going on, correct; but it is to different people in different locations to attract the right type of visitor that we want to the region.

Senator Titus:

The right type of visitor definition is based on those folks doing the marketing, or TRPA, or who is deciding who the right type of visitor is?

Mr. Middlebrook:

I think in general; the marketing organizations understand their demographics better than I will; I do not want to speak for them on that. But generally speaking, we want to make sure we are attracting visitors who have the same environmental ethos that we want. We do not want necessarily to attract a bunch of bachelor parties that are going to go tear up the beach and litter everywhere. We want ecotourism—people who are out here hiking and enjoying the Lake.

Senator Titus:

I have concerns about that, but we will have a private conversation over that—or I will have more questions. I guess that will be public, because I have concerns that you are not opening this—this is public taxpayers for a lot of this stuff. It should be open to all the public. You should not define who is welcome here at Tahoe. You may be able to define their behavior when they get here, like not throwing trash; but marketing to certain groups of people has many concerns.

Next question I have is you quickly went over the resident survey results, and you said only 21 percent of residents agree that tourism and recreation support the quality of life. Actually, I am surprised there is that many who think that, and I am wondering if; you did this survey—you presented this information. Does that not have any impact on what you do?

Mr. Middlebrook:

That is one of those key metrics that jumped out on the page to all of us; as this is the core of the problem in the system that we are trying to address. That is exactly what we are trying to do is figure out why that is and solve that.

Senator Titus:

But I did not see any of that in this presentation; in turning the shared vision into governance. The shared vision and that statement—did you come up with that or did the public come up with that?

Mr. Middlebrook:

It was developed through public input.

Senator Titus:

One final comment is that I served on this Committee in the 2016 Interim, and I do not remember this kind of public frustration being presented to us during that total interim Committee that we were here with. As a matter of fact, if anything, we were supported by the people who lived here with the different presentations. For me, sitting here now, eight years later on the same Committee—seeing the change in the public perspective and the frustration of the people who live in these communities—I have been quite shocked by it actually, and what has happened here at Lake Tahoe. In the past, the community complained to me that TRPA overregulated everything, they could not get anything done, they could not get their permits, they could not build when they wanted to—these were people who lived here. Now I am hearing almost a polar opposite view from the community. I have big concerns about what I am hearing you present versus what I am hearing from the public, and they are not aligning. There is a lot of wordsmithing going on, but I am not really seeing where the efforts are to solve this problem. Looking forward to having more dialogue on that.

Chair Daly:

Committee, any other questions?

Senator Scheible:

Thank you, Chair, and thank you for your presentation. I have a question about the same part of the presentation as my colleague, Senator Titus, regarding this statistic that jumped out at all of us about the resident survey, and the role that recreation and tourism plays in the daily life of people who live in this area. I appreciate that a survey is static, but you also did 30 one-on-one interviews, 15 discussion groups, and 9 workshops. I am wondering, is TRPA's takeaway here that we are doing tourism wrong, and that is why the residents do not feel that it supports their quality of life? Or is the issue that residents fundamentally believe tourism decreases their quality of life, and they would like to see less. Less tourism means an increased quality of life.

Mr. Middlebrook:

I think it is a little bit of both. As you heard, I think in one of our previous presentations, in the eighties and nineties when casino gaming was the thing in Tahoe, everyone would come to the casino, stay in the casinos, maybe venture out to the beach or a trail. The casinos in our North Shore and South Shore stateline areas were that main draw. With that casino economy going away for various reasons, the visitation pattern and what people do at Tahoe has changed. Demand for outdoor recreation has changed; stand up paddle boards, electric bikes (ebikes), mountain biking, backcountry skiing—none of those sports even existed 40 or 30 years ago. We have really seen a shift in how people are coming to Tahoe; what they are doing in Tahoe; and our infrastructure did not keep up. We are having people go to areas that they were not, as many people use travel apps and trail apps. Now the trail out into the forest at the back of the neighborhood that only people in the neighborhood knew about, that is on everyone's cell phone now. We are seeing the system around us has changed; which is leading to things like more congestion in neighborhoods, litter on our beaches, and on our trails. That is what is breeding some of that frustration. In COVID-19 when we saw that big rush—there is a lot of visitation in certain peak demand areas that cause hotspot problems. It is also an issue. It is a little bit of both.

Chair Daly:

Thank you and I have a couple of questions, maybe comments. From everything I hear from all of the people—people who live here and tourists—the problem is people. There are too many people, and we are not going to outlaw people either way. We are not going to tell the citizens “You gotta move,” or “Too bad, sorry for you.” We are not going to tell the tourists not to come, because they have the right to enjoy life the same as everybody else. If we are not going to outlaw people—everyone can hopefully agree with that—we are going to have to find a way to make this work for everybody the best we can.

I am reminded of a story I will share. When I was talking to a person at the door—when I was campaigning—and they hated the school district, the Washington County School District. They had their issues at the time; and they said, “Everybody at the School District are bums and they are not doing anything; they are not doing their job; they are horrible,” et cetera. I asked this person, “Really?” I said, “There are good people at the School District trying to do the best they can with the resources they have.” I said, “Do you really think there are people at the School District that get up in the morning and think to themselves, ‘I am going to go to work today and see what I can screw up next.’” I finally got that person to admit there are probably not people doing that. They are going to work trying to do the best they can to address this interaction between people. Groups of people each have their

own concerns, their own points of view, their own opinions. But we still have to come up with a way for that interaction to happen. There are not people getting up and going to work anywhere, thinking of ways to screw things up. I think people are trying to make it better.

I will ask my question on the Destination Stewardship. You talk about a Council, under the TRPA. It is one of their prongs that they are supposed to do in the Compact, and which has been read lately, by myself at least. When you use the term Council, is that an appointed thing? Is it a subcommittee within the TRPA? I see the structure here and then you have the pillars underneath. Is that all with the TRPA under the Compact—so explain a little bit more how this Council comes into being and then what authority do they have, et cetera.

Mr. Middlebrook:

The Council is an informal partnership of all the partners you saw on that screen; they all came together and formed under a charter. All of the organizations that participated, formed their own charter; it is not an official TRPA organization. The TRPA is a member of that Council. That Council is not a formal group at this point; it is not a 501(c). That Council does not actually have any authority. The power of that Council is the folks at the Council table getting together, identifying the problems; and when there needs to be a solution put in place, if someone raises their hand and says "I have the authority to," for example, "I own beach land, I have the authority to go put in some more porta potties; I am going to do that action." That is how that Council is set up for now.

Chair Daly:

When you say that someone issued the charter—they issued it to themselves—I am trying to understand. I understand if there are people in groups, let us say we have a shared common interest to try to address some of this stewardship destination. But you mentioned that it was part of what the TRPA is supposed to be doing on the recreational side of the whole thing. How did we morph into this structure? Then you talked about funds that were raised and various things. If there is no formal structure, who is raising the money? Who is keeping it? Then who decides where it gets spent, and on what, and when?

Mr. Middlebrook:

Thank you for the clarification. On the second piece, the financial piece—all of the partners do contribute to the Council to support Nettie's position and the implementation of actions. The Tahoe Fund is the fiscal agent for that. The Tahoe Fund is managing that. In terms of—sorry, can you repeat the first part of your question?

Chair Daly:

Their charter—how did they get it? They issued themselves a charter. I understand it is like-minded groups of people that came together. Who instigated it? Who started it? Did TRPA say, "Hey, we have this recreation thing in our TRPA requirements, and we need to manage this interface between people," that we just talked about. Where is the genesis? Who started it? Is TRPA driving the bus? Are developers driving the bus? You said there are partner agencies in the counties, and then the money—that they are not spending on advertising near as much, and trying to put into these management deals. So, where is the genesis? Who is making the decisions? Who is diverting the money—not spending it here, spending it there. Because it goes back to the concerns and the various things we have heard today on that. What is the goal? I am trying to get to the part where we are managing the interface between the people, and not everybody is going to be happy; that is

just the way it is. I am never going to tell you that tourists cannot come here—people cannot come visit the Lake. I am also not going to say, “All of you people who came here that are impacting anybody that is already here— leave.” We are not going to say that either. I am curious on what the structure of this is, what the end goal really is, and how that is being implemented.

Mr. Middlebrook:

It was actually born out of our environmental improvement program and former Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU) Forest Supervisor Jeff Marsolais started bringing up this topic. Then sustainable recreation, which has morphed into the buzzword of destination stewardship—started to bring that forward because of the Forest Service owning 85 percent of the land. But then you have got California State Parks, Nevada State Parks, various public landowners—every one of us had different plans for how we were managing recreation. The Forest Service would do a project, and it would impact the other side of the street, which was State Parks, and there was no communication and coordination. While TRPA has our recreation plans—our recreation policies, there was still that multijurisdictional breakdown. That is where this partnership and the idea was formed; it was like, “We need to get it together.” When someone rides their bike down a bike path that crosses from Forest Service land to State Parks land, back to Forest Service land, to State Parks land in the share of a mile—the user does not know they just crossed all those invisible lines. The rules need to be the same; the systems need to be the same; the signage needs to be the same. That is where it was born out of.

Chair Daly:

Thank you, that makes sense. I think we talked about that at a previous meeting as well, where we had the three entities in Washoe County regarding schools and we said, “All of you need to get on the same page, so you are doing the same thing, at the same time; so everybody knows what the other one is doing, and we can hopefully streamline that.” I agree with that, similar to the conversation we had on the transportation—trying to get people like the RSCVA and North Tahoe Visitors Authority to say, “Shift away from here and try to get the VMT down.” I am still hoping they are having those conversations, if they are listening today, they better, before the end of this, to try to say, “We need to address this transportation issue.” Now, is that going to make everybody in the room happy? No, but we still have to do it one way or the other. I understand that, and I think those collaborations need to stay focused on the issue of destination stewardship and not let it veer. That is my recommendation.

Committee, any further questions? Vice Chair, do you have any questions now?

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

No, you guys covered a lot, so I appreciate you.

Chair Daly:

Excellent. Seeing no further questions, we will close Item IV.

AGENDA ITEM V—PRESENTATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING SUSTAINABLE RECREATION, AND UPDATE ON NEVADA STATE PARKS IN THE TAHOE BASIN

Chair Daly:

We will go to Item V, which is a presentation by DCNR regarding sustainable recreation and update on Nevada State Parks in the Basin. I think we have Bob Mergell from the Nevada Division of State Parks. Look, he is in uniform and everything. All right, it is a good day. Welcome.

Bob Mergell, Administrator, Division of State Parks, DCNR:

Thank you and good afternoon, Chair Daly, and Members of the Committee. I have a couple of quick slides about who we are, for any of you that might not know exactly who we are and what it is that we do. This is our mission [to develop and manage Nevada's system of parks and recreation areas, contribute to a vibrant economy, and protect areas of scenic, historic, and scientific importance]. I only bring it up because I am here to talk about sustainable recreation, and you will notice a lot of similarities between the definition of sustainable recreation and what our mission is. I tried to get our mission statement changed to "Managing all of Nevada's coolest stuff, and making sure it is still here for our grandkids' grandkids," but they wanted this more technical one. (Agenda Item V)

Very briefly—we have 27 state parks, and they are scattered all over the State in pretty much every geological location we have. We have 145 permanent staff and about 140 plus or minus seasonal folks. We are separated into four different regions, Tahoe being one of those. This is what we do. I am not going to go over all of that, but we do interpretive events. We protect all of our cultural and natural resources and I think, in my opinion, what our most important function is—is to provide affordable family recreation. There are a lot of different definitions of sustainable recreation. I like this one; it is pretty concise, but similar to our mission. It is all about management and enjoyment of natural and cultural resources in a way that meets the needs of present visitors without compromising the ability of future generations to enjoy those same resources. Sounds super easy. It sounds awesome, but it is easier said than done, it turns out. These are the key components to doing sustainable recreation. Your collaboration and community engagement are super critical. If everybody in that same area does not have the same desires or goals, it is going to be very difficult for you all to come together and attain those goals if they are all over the board. Therefore, it is super important to have that collaboration between your community partners and the local area there.

Responsible visitor management—this one is, I would argue, the largest challenge, as has been brought up many times. It is people out trying to recreate and enjoy the resources or the area, and people do that in different ways. Some people do that in a more harmful way, and some people are able to do that in a more sustainable way that is easier on the environment. That is arguably our biggest challenge; trying to get everybody to recreate responsibly so those resources will be around for many generations to come. That is where the conservation and preservation come into play. There is a difference between those two things. There are resources out there that—you can imagine a conservation mentality—knowing there is going to be some damage, but you can mitigate it, come back in, and you can bring those resources back. You know it is going to be kind of an ebb and flow, but you can manage for those. But there are sometimes where you have to have preservation in mind; meaning that if you lose that resource, it will never come back. It is important to

recognize those resources and work very diligently to preserve those, more so than just conserve those.

That leads into education interpretation, which is largely how we go about doing all of these things. With our visitors, when they come out, we do our best to impress upon them the importance of recreating responsibly and making sure they are not leaving trash that is going to potentially entice bears to come in the area. That is going to be a whole other problem; there is one problem that leads to another problem. But it all starts in educating our visitors. It is the same with interpretation. If you can show people the importance of that area and the importance of those resources, whether they are cultural or natural, then that is how you can try to get partners—or have people get a vested interest—in helping you to do your mission of preserving those things.

Lastly, recreation planning and design. If you are expecting people to come in and recreate responsibly and you bring people into an area—if you do not put a restroom there, that does not mean they are not going to need to use a restroom. You have to make sure you have the facilities in place if you are going to bring people in, and that is only part of the equation; because you put the infrastructure in, or you put those facilities in, you have to have people that can manage those things and keep them clean and continue to pick up the trash. Putting in a trash can does not solve the problem. When that trash can is overflowing; you are right back to where you started, which is with litter all over the area.

I am going to run through all of the parks that are up here in the Tahoe area. To show examples of how those key components to sustainable recreation are actually put into practice at our various parks. Cave Rock, I think everybody here knows it is mostly a boat ramp facility. We manage the property, but the boat inspectors, for instance, that are there are—that is not our program. We hire the boat ramp inspectors, and we supervise them, but it is not our program. We collaborate on that to make sure the boats are being inspected. Without that cooperative mindset, it would be impossible for one entity to handle a lake-wide boat inspection program that straddles state lines, and is in a lot of different land managers' properties.

Sand Harbor could be a case study in sustainable recreation. I believe every challenge with every one of the key components is very real; and you can see how those interact with each other, specifically at Sand Harbor. This briefly shows what the visitation has done there over the last decade plus. In 2012, we had 365,000 visitors to Sand Harbor; and last year, almost a million more. That is insane that you can fit that many people into that area. We keep thinking that full is full, and yet people still find more ways to get into that park. There are a lot of challenges there, and how we are managing that is through some of these items.

I should have probably given the spoiler alert right at the beginning, so everybody could pay attention to the rest of my presentation. Mid-August on the weekends is when we are going to be going live with the reservation program. I probably should have led with that, and then some people might have got up and left, I am not sure. We did have challenges and I do not want to take time to complain, but we had to do a *Nevada Administrative Code* (NAC) revision in order to even legally be able to collect funds for doing a reservation system at Sand Harbor. With the help of a lot of folks, we did get our regulations changed, so we now can actually move forward with the reservation program. We are implementing that program right now as we speak, down at Big Bend of the Colorado River [State Recreation Area] in Laughlin. Their challenges are very similar to Sand Harbor, but on a slightly smaller scale. We are using them as the guinea pigs to work out the kinks before we go live with it up here. Memorial Day weekend should be interesting. Anybody that wants to

see a circus is welcome to go down to Big Bend of the Colorado in Laughlin, because that is when we are expecting the first major arrival of all of the folks that are doing day-use reservations for the first time. With that, a little bit on how we are going to do that; is it going to be a timed entry. Our reservations—it will be reservation only from 7:30 in the morning until 11:30 a.m. The only way you get in is with a reservation. We are hoping that will alleviate the traffic back up onto the highway. There would be no reason to back up onto the highway. If you do not have a reservation, you are not getting in. If you do have a reservation, you are going to get in. You should not have to show up at 7:00 in the morning because you can show up at 9:00 and we will happily let you in because we have a spot reserved. I am not guaranteeing this is going to go perfectly right out of the gate, but I am saying I think this will be a very good first step in trying to alleviate some of the issues we are having with highway congestion. One of the other things is, we are getting ready to kick off the master plan update of Sand Harbor; it has not been done in far too long. With the use of environmental improvement program funding, we are starting on the new master plan for the Sand Harbor area.

Spooner Lake—I think everybody knows and if you do not know, then stop by there on your way home. We opened a new Visitor Center there this year. It is pretty spectacular, specifically when it comes to the education interpretation. One of the things we made a focus on there was to put in an amphitheater that we can do programs in and a lot of signage. This was a very collaborative effort; and the amphitheater—we would not have been able to get that in there if it was not for help from the Tahoe Fund and their private funding they were able to bring along. We are going to be doing geological, historical programming. It is a spectacular Visitor Center; but one of the other things, and as you heard earlier with the destination tourism, we redesigned the group use areas there hoping we can take some of the pressure off of the group use area at Sand Harbor. It is an apples and oranges thing. If you want to go to the beach, it is not exactly the same thing to go to Spooner. But we are hoping those group use areas are nice enough in their own way that people will be like, "You know what, we did not need to go to the beach. We are still up at Tahoe. It is still spectacular." We are hoping we can move that use over to Spooner and help take some of that burden off.

Van Sickle Bi-State Park—we are through the planning and design parts or aspects of sustainable recreation. We are in the process of designing a visitor center for that area. But one of the other challenges is staffing. Right now, we do not have a park supervisor out there, we only have seasonal staff at Van Sickle. We are still moving forward with the planning. We will be asking for funding in this upcoming legislative session most likely, to try to figure out how we are going to start doing construction there. We are going to need employee housing; it has been a struggle for us to fill positions up in the Tahoe area because there is not a lot of housing available for the wages we pay our staff.

One of the key components that was not mentioned in that list earlier—it is not necessarily mentioned in a lot of places, but it is absolutely a key component to sustainable recreation—and that is employees. We almost got to the point where we had to close Sand Harbor for two days of the week last year, because we were at a critical spot with our staffing. We did not have enough people in order to keep that Park open seven days a week. We were able to get assistance through the local media; they did news reporting on that. We also had some employees who do not work up at Lake Tahoe—but that work for us—that went and started beating the doors looking for any high school kid that was willing to ride a shuttle up to Sand Harbor. We started running a bus out of Carson City, just to bring people. They came from Dayton, we put them on a bus, we shipped them up here, and we were able to keep the Park open. We have a new Education Information Officer who started this "Work Where You Play" campaign this year; this has gotten a lot more interest in our

vacancies throughout the State. This has helped a lot; he is super active on social media. We are putting these advertisements out because we do not just struggle up here at Lake Tahoe; it is a statewide issue with us to fill all of our positions, but this has helped.

I will briefly touch on funding sources. That is the other thing when you are doing projects; we cannot build anything or do a lot of the programs or projects we want to do without finding adequate funding. These are the typical funding sources we use to do visitor centers, campground improvements, or any kind of projects in our parks. We rely heavily on the General Fund. The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP), specifically for here at Lake Tahoe, is a funding source that we lean on constantly. Same with the Lake Tahoe License Plate Fund. The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a great program; it is a 50/50 match, but it is federal funding. It comes with a lot of strings attached, and we cannot always get our projects done in a timely manner or within budget if we attach these particular strings. Sometimes we cannot look at this funding because it will trigger the Build America Buy America Act; and the costs go up significantly if there is a lot of steel, for instance, in that particular project. So, we are careful with how we use that funding. The Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program is a 20 percent match; we utilize that a lot. Donations—I mentioned the Tahoe Fund earlier, they have been a great partner over the years. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) money is generally for large scale projects, visitor centers—those types of things are usually CIP projects. Conserve Nevada's bond funding that we have access to—we have \$30 million worth of authority. We have spent some of that; but we are dependent on when the bonds get sold, so sometimes that timing does not exactly align with when we want to do projects. Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) has a Boating Access Grant. Then miscellaneous grant funding—we were successful in getting a Hearts of Stihl Grant; they purchased a portable sawmill for us so we can do some of the thinning projects here in the Basin. We can actually keep some of those logs and mill them right on site to use them for—whether it is—construction projects or if we want to redo picnic tables with local wood, we can do that. Then the Bronco Wild Fund—we were successful in getting a grant for a track chair, which we will have available soon, is a machine that allows folks who have mobility issues to be able to check out this track chair. We will not charge anything for it and then they can use it to access trails, where they would not be able to otherwise go.

Visitation constraints—here are some pictures. I think everybody here knows what Sand Harbor looks like in the middle of summer. That is a photo of the Spooner Visitor Center, if you guys have not been able to get out there. That was when we did the ribbon cutting for that; it turned out pretty amazing. Some of the other projects that we have up and coming for the parks here in Tahoe is—as I said, we just did the Visitor Center at Spooner. We are in the process of designing a Visitor Center for Van Sickle. Sand Harbor restroom replacement—that is a current State Public Works' project; they are in the process of replacing a couple of our restrooms there. We are getting ready to do the Master Plan for Sand Harbor. At the back country, Spooner Lakes had a helicopter logging project. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

Chair Daly:

Committee, we will start up here. Any questions? Assemblyman.

Assemblyman Gray:

Hi, Bob. Going back to the reservation system, how far out in advance can you reserve a spot?

Mr. Mergell:

Our window for camping is 11 months; so, 11 months out, you can reserve a spot. For up here, what we are looking at doing is a rolling window. We are going to open up a certain amount of spaces 90 days out, another block of spaces 60, and another block 30. People who live further away can plan further out. People who live more local might not be planning for the whole summer coming out. We are going to fine tune that. I make no promises that this is going to be perfect right out of the gate. We are probably going to be adjusting those to see how that works over time. We are also going to be looking at the—initially when we first go out, if we have 550 parking spaces, we are probably going to have 400 of those available for reservations, for instance, so we know we have spaces available when we open up for “first come, first served” at 11:30 a.m. We want to make sure people who show up for the day do still have some spaces. We are going to be tweaking those numbers and seeing what works best, because we have never done it. I have had conversations with the directors for Texas State Parks, Missouri State Parks, and Oregon State Parks. They have all recently gone to day-use reservations in several of their locations. Texas has a park that is very similar to ours, so we kind of modeled it after what they did because it worked pretty well for them. We are not exactly recreating the wheel, but kind of.

Assemblyman Gray:

I have been to Texas. Their parks are not anything like ours.

Mr. Mergell:

Ours are way better. Theirs are bigger, but ours are better.

Assemblyman Gray:

With the reservation system, is that going to be operated by you guys or a third-party vendor?

Mr. Mergell:

We have a third-party vendor, and they have been creating this reservation system for us because they have other states out there. But we are very much different than the states they already have, so it has taken a minute or two to get it configured for us. We are still—like one of the issues we are having, for instance, is when I went on a trip for work a week ago and when I left, we could not do same day reservations. That is a problem. We have to be able to do same day reservations. When I left, we could not do it; when I got back yesterday, as of this morning, we can. We are still working through issues with them. But, it is a third party.

Assemblyman Gray:

In addition to the entrance fee—how do you envision this working? Are they going to pay a fee to reserve the spot and then pay the entrance fee at the gate?

Mr. Mergell:

When they pay the fee, they are paying for all of that at the time. If they go online, they reserve it—

Assemblyman Gray:

There is going to be an additional fee for the vendor taking the reservation.

Mr. Mergell:

Yes, that is ultimately how the system will be paid for—is through the reservation fee.

Assemblyman Gray:

I am going to throw you a curveball. What about the folks that have passes? What about Veterans? What about disabled Veterans? Native Americans?

Mr. Mergell:

We are not doing mandatory reservations. You do not have to make a reservation, so because of that, if a person does not want to pay the reservation fee, they do not have to; they can do a day-use type of thing.

Assemblyman Gray:

If they are collecting it all at once—what if you are planning a family event?

Mr. Mergell:

If your fees are waived—if you have a permit that covers your day-use, camping, all of those fees, your permit will be linked to your account. When you go online to make your reservation, you are not paying for any of those fees. The reservation fee is not waived because that is a third-party fee; the \$5 reservation fee still exists. The other issue with not charging that fee is then people who have annual permits where they are not paying any other fees could just go in and reserve whatever they wanted; it costs them nothing. The problem is, nationwide there is a trend of people not showing up. They have taken those spaces because they went in, and they reserved everything because it did not cost them anything; and then they do not show up because there is no incentive to let us know they are not coming. That fee serves a couple of different purposes; and one of them is to make sure people are going to only reserve things they really want to do. That is how it is structured as of right now.

Assemblyman Gray:

Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Senator Titus.

Senator Titus:

I am a proud visitor of all the Nevada State Parks; and good job, by the way, on the newest one in Las Vegas.

Mr. Mergell:

Thank you.

Senator Titus:

I have my State Park pass, because I go to the state parks so often. When I got this new one compared to the ones I have had over the many years, it is definitely a different design. Will this number then be coordinated in your system? So, when I go online for my state park—to come up here to Sand Harbor, this number will be in there knowing that I already have paid for this entry, and then I will just pay the fee to do it.

Mr. Mergell:

The short answer is yes. That one, when you got it—I will not swear that is automatically linked to your account. Moving forward though, every pass that gets purchased will be linked to a profile in the system. So, when you go to reserve a spot or get a day-use reservation for Sand Harbor, you would put that number in, and it will waive all of those other fees because you have already paid for them. All you would be paying is that \$5 reservation fee, for instance.

Senator Titus:

The next question I have—I am very supportive of the reservation concept that makes people who come to visit accountable for coming here and making sure they have a spot when they get here. I am also happy there is going to be the option of—if you have any available space, people will come up and there are five parking places that are still available—you will let somebody in; because not everybody is forward thinking and have plans. It might be a nice day, and someone suddenly says, “Let us go.” Having said all that, you have high-peak use times like the Shakespeare Festival, that I like to come up to at Sand Harbor. Will you have—your vendor will know—you will block out those special use times where there is an event going on? So, people will not be able to reserve that at that time? Or how is that going to be, logistically?

Mr. Mergell:

Yes, our individual staff can go in if we have a special event on a particular day and we can block that out. There are going to be times where we are going to close an entire park just to do maintenance. We will go, in advance, and we will close the entire campground loop, for instance. We have the ability to do that, both at the individual park and out of our Division office.

Senator Titus:

Very good. Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Senator Scheible.

Senator Scheible:

I am going to jump in here, because I also have questions. While you were talking, I went ahead and created my account online with the Nevada State Parks—even though I promise I have been to state parks before, I just had not created an account before—to make my reservation to go to Big Bend over Memorial Day Weekend. I think overall, it is a great system. I have a couple of questions about how it works, and how it is going to work. First of all, to my colleague, Senator Titus’s point, I have got all the way through to put my

credit card in and there has been no option to enter my State Parks pass number. I do not know how the powers that be would know if I had one of those passes, but there was an option to check if I was eligible for an ADA or military discount. I think if I did that—well now when I hit the back button, I am in a totally different place, so I cannot check it.

I have two questions. First, are we ever going to have a reservation system where all the reservations are not at the same time? I can make a reservation at Big Bend for the 25th of May, and I have to be there by 11:30 a.m. But what if we had reservations that you had to be out by 1 p.m. and then we had a new group that can come in by 3 p.m.

Mr. Mergell:

Okay, now I get your question. Are we ever going to have that? I do not know; I can tell you we discussed having that, and there are definitely pros and cons to that. The downside to that is if you do time slots, then you have to guarantee that a person is out of that slot. We are not going to be able to go in and tow vehicles just because they stay 20 minutes late. The person who came in for that next time slot, if they are like, "There is somebody in my spot;"—that is a challenge. Might we get there at some point? Yes, because our first desire was to do time slots at Sand Harbor specifically; because we know people do not go there and stay all day. If we reserved a spot for the entire day, now we are losing out on revenue. More importantly, we are restricting people's ability to go in there and use that same space; we do not want that either. This is the best we could come up with keeping in mind that Nevada was the last state of all 50 to get a reservation system. We have never had one; this is all new to us. We are doing the best we can to figure it out. We have done a lot of discussions with other states that do have them to try to figure out what works best.

Senator Scheible:

That touches on my next question. I am on reservenevada.com. I also see options to make reservations at Valley of Fire State Park, Cave Lake State Park at the Ward Charcoal Ovens State Historic Park—are you saying that all of those are brand-new?

Mr. Mergell:

Reservation system-wise? Yes, we have never had reservation systems before. Some of those went live in September of last year [2023]. All of them went live as of December of last year [2023]. People have had the ability to make camping reservations at all of our state parks since December. Day-use reservations are brand-new. Big Bend is the first park that we are going to roll out the day-use reservations and Sand Harbor will be the second place. We are looking at doing day-use reservations probably only in three parks, because none of the rest of them fill up because of day uses.

Senator Scheible:

My very general question—how is it going with the camping reservations? Is it working? I am sure there are details to work out, but how is it going?

Mr. Mergell:

Generally speaking, it is going well. We have definitely had a couple of speed bumps here and there. But generally speaking, it has been well received. Over the years we have had a lot of people who would call and say, "I am not coming if I do not have a reservation, because I am not going to roll the dice." We have also had a lot of local folks that are like, "I am never going there again, because I do not know what I am doing three months from

now. I like to just wake up that morning, and decide if I am going to go camping out at my local park.” I think the reality is, that is not really going to happen. The only park we have that is filling up to capacity is Valley of Fire, and it always is filled to capacity. It will be a net positive every place. It is new, and it turns out people are not super excited about change sometimes.

Senator Scheible:

Just to clarify, there is nothing stopping the person who gets up in the morning and decides to go to one of the state parks from going. In fact, they could even check online, not make a reservation, but see there are still campsites available before they drive four hours out of town to the campgrounds.

Mr. Mergell:

That is correct.

Senator Scheible:

That is fascinating. One last question. I do not know if other states have done this—other places have done this. It is probably a weird idea. I know my colleagues are very concerned about ensuring that everybody has access to our state parks, and they are concerned about the financial requirements to pay for this reservation system—you are paying for your ticket in advance. What if we had some kind of rebate or validation system where you can become eligible? We bank on the assumption that not everybody will utilize it. But what if, when you pay your \$20 to reserve your space at Sand Harbor, you also get a \$5 validation ticket or \$5 to use on your next reservation or something like that. You put the money down initially to have the buy in, but then you do not have to pay the full cost to actually experience the park.

Mr. Mergell:

A person makes a reservation, and they pay the \$5; if they show up, we incentivize that by giving them the \$5 back—is that what you are saying? That is outside the box. I get you. I would be hesitant to do that because—as to what I said earlier, the reservation system costs us money one way or the other. If we pay for the reservation system upfront, there is no real incentive for the reservation company to make sure the system stays functioning, if they are not dependent on those reservations for part of their revenue. We are going to be dead last when it comes to a fix-it ticket to get our system back online. There has to be some financial incentive, and having a contract with liquidated damage is not going to do it. It has to be in real time, like—you are losing money by not having our system online. That is part of it, there has to be that financial incentive to the reservation system in order to keep it functional.

Senator Scheible:

That does make sense. I see what you are saying. Thank you, appreciate it.

Chair Daly:

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod, do you have a question before we go to Senator Titus?

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Thank you, I do have a question. If someone wants to go to Sand Harbor, and tries to make a reservation online and a reservation is not available; is there any way we could then maybe recommend Spooner since that is a newer thing? Give them another option? I was just wondering. I know you said that it just opened, so we have no idea if Spooner is going to—you said it is apples and oranges, but if you want to go up to the Lake and you want to bring your family up to the Lake, that is at least another option. Have you guys thought about doing something like that?

Mr. Mergell:

Yes. That is fairly easy for us to do. A lot of state's reservation systems, if you go on there and pick the place you want to go and it is full, it will say, "Have you thought about this place?" We can certainly do that. It has been our experience that people who are coming up to the Lake for the day with their beach toys and that type of thing—it is not the same thing to then turn around and go to Spooner and look at that lake, but not swim in it. But yes, we can do that. Yes, we will be doing that to try to encourage people to use other locations. But it is going to be a hard sell to get people to consider Spooner as a good second option to Sand Harbor.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

You cannot swim in Spooner. Is that correct? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Mergell:

You do not find a lot of people swimming in Spooner. It is totally different recreational opportunities at Spooner than it is at Sand Harbor.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Gotcha. One other question, you mentioned at our state parks—do we have the bear proof trash cans?

Mr. Mergell:

We do have bear proof trash cans at other locations. We have them out at the Walker River State Recreation areas. We have had black bears meander out there on occasion.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

You might not know the answer, and maybe this is not appropriate. Do Tahoe residents have to have bear proof trash cans?

Mr. Mergell:

Now, I am looking at a bunch of nodding heads, so I am going with—yes, they do.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Alright, thank you.

Chair Daly:

Senator Titus.

Senator Titus:

Thank you for allowing me to come back to another bite at this apple here. Like my colleague here, I Googled really quick about reservations at state parks, because we are planning for our family. We go to Wild Horse a lot, and I knew you needed reservations for those little cabins that are out there, but not that you need reservations to find a campsite there.

Mr. Mergell:

You do not need reservations, but you can make reservations.

Senator Titus:

I Googled it really quickly, "State Parks reservations for Nevada;" and it pops up and says, "Nevada does not have a reservation system at this time."

Mr. Mergell:

Google was not accurate?

Senator Titus:

I know; I am just saying whoever is doing your system—your Information Technology (IT) folks—are going to have to clear out a few things, because it says it does not have it. "Nevada State Parks does not have a reservation system, they are 'first come, first served.' However, it is in the planning stages." When you go online and find the stuff, it is a little bit behind. Obviously, there is still a lot of work to be done. Thank you, that is all.

Chair Daly:

Assemblyman Gray.

Assemblyman Gray:

A couple of other questions popped up in my head. Early in the season, Sand Harbor does not tend to fill up really early. If you do not have a reservation, are they going to tell you, "No, you cannot come in until 11:30," even though there are spots sitting there that are empty?

Mr. Mergell:

At Big Bend, for instance, we were initially going to do weekends and holidays only, because generally speaking, they do not fill up during the week. But still allow people to make reservations for convenience's sake, if they want to make sure, because it might fill up on a Thursday; it generally speaking does not. Sand Harbor will fill up; we know that. Except, to your point, early in the season and sometimes with weather and who knows what. The short answer is there will be a mechanism for us to be able to still get those people in. It may be when people show up, that we still have them make a reservation. But on that day, the fee is waived because we are making it mandatory that they get it or something like that. I am not 100 percent sure how that is going to shake out yet, because it is still a work in

progress. We have been kicking that idea around; that from an inventory tracking perspective 100 percent reservations during that period make sense. But if somebody shows up and they did not actually reserve it in advance, do I care that they are paying the \$5? I do not think I do. Now, a person could look at that and say, "Oh, now you are incentivizing people to not reserve and to just show up." Maybe so, but it is also a gamble. You can show up that day, but if everybody else reserved it, then you are not getting in. It is still "first come, first served" in that regard. So, no, we are not going to turn people away if there are spaces, that is the short answer. How we are going to address that is still a little bit up in the air; we are still working through that.

Assemblyman Gray:

Will you guys have a real-time occupancy rate? Like 90 percent?

Mr. Mergell:

Yes, if we go with "everybody has to have a reservation." That is the only way the system will actually track the inventory. Once it comes to "first come, first served," we wanted the reservation system to be able to put inventory back into the system. If somebody leaves, we wanted to be able to hit a button or something to put a spot back into the inventory; the system cannot do that right now. We do not have a way to put inventory back into the system once we reach capacity. We are going to have to do that manually, so that is why that reservation window is for a set period of time. After that, it will be space management.

Assemblyman Gray:

You are doing great. I am sorry, we are a firing line up here. But one last curveball, it just dawned on me. The only ones that get the permits are the disabled Veterans. The Native Americans and the Veterans, we passed the law in this last session do not get permits. They have to prove their—

Mr. Mergell:

They get a permit.

Assemblyman Gray:

They have to go buy the \$30 permit.

Mr. Mergell:

They do not; they get a free permit.

Assemblyman Gray:

That is new from the last time I checked.

Mr. Mergell:

How our system works, is we have two permits. We have a day-use annual permit, and we have an all-access permit. Both of those permits each have certain discounts associated with them. The day-use permit has a discount for Veterans and a discount for tribal

members that bring that dollar amount to zero. They get a free permit, but it has to be a permit because they have to show us proof that they are either a Veteran or they are a tribal member.

Assemblyman Gray:

Why do we charge for the ADA or the all-access ones?

Mr. Mergell:

We charge for those ones because that was the way those have always been structured. What they are charged for is an administrative fee. The administrative fee is associated with both the Senior Citizen Permit and the Disabled Veteran Permit. They are different permits though. The Veteran Permit and the Tribal Member Permit are day-use permits; they get those for free. The Senior Permit and the Disabled Veteran Permit are all-access permits. That is a permit we would normally charge \$250 for, but we are giving them that one for the administrative fee of \$30.

Assemblyman Gray:

That one covers camping, boating—. I appreciate that. I had a lot of questions, thank you.

Chair Daly:

I have a couple; mine should be relatively easy. I did the quick math on the 1.2 million, divided by 365, which came out to 3,494—I think. What is the capacity for Sand Harbor? I know some people are coming in the morning and leaving by the afternoon, other people are coming in the afternoon. What is the capacity? Do you know?

Mr. Mergell:

I thought you said your question was going to be an easy one.

Chair Daly:

It is not easy.

Mr. Mergell:

The capacity—we have had a couple of different capacity studies done at Sand Harbor. It changes depending on what the Lake level is. Obviously, the lower the water level, the more beach you have, the more people that could theoretically fit in there. Generally speaking, the carrying capacity or what the amount of people that we should have in that park at any one time is roughly 1,500 people. When Sand Harbor was originally designed, that is how they ended up with the 500 parking spaces. Our vehicle occupancy factors three—typically about three people are in a vehicle. They did the math really quick and said, “1,500 people, let us put in 500 parking spaces.” When the parking spaces are full, we close the doors and nobody else gets in until people get out. We generally exceed 1,500 people during the summer.

Chair Daly:

I bet. How did you come up with the 1.2 million people?

Mr. Mergell:

As far as the visitors?

Chair Daly:

Yes.

Mr. Mergell:

We have updated the vehicle occupancy factors. That is one of the parks that we have an attended fee booth nearly year-round. There is always somebody in there. But even when there is not, we still have traffic counters. We count every vehicle that comes into that park. Then using that vehicle occupancy factor of three point whatever it is—it changes seasonally. Every month that vehicle occupancy factor has the potential of moving from 2.67 to 3.8; it goes all over the place. But the best that we can, that is where those numbers come from is from the number of vehicles in and how many people were in the vehicle.

Chair Daly:

Based on the cars, but people can walk in?

Mr. Mergell:

It is, and we do our best to count the number of people that are coming in via the East Shore Trail. We also count the number of times—when the TTD shuttle runs from Incline; we count those numbers also. All of those visitor numbers are in there—the best that we can. I am not going to stand up here and tell you that is accurate to the person, because it is not.

Chair Daly:

No, I understand. I was trying to get an idea. Basically, it is factored off of the parking spaces.

Mr. Mergell:

It is factored off of every vehicle that comes in over the course of the year that hits our traffic counter, and we have pedestrian counters on the Trail. Those are the best numbers we have.

Chair Daly:

Second question, I hope you find it easy. Going back to our previous presentation, State Parks is part of that group for the Destination Stewardship Council. Have you guys found that to be useful on the things you are doing, and your input into that has been useful for the other? Have you found that to be the collaborative mechanism that we need to have in the Basin?

Mr. Mergell:

We are partners with a lot of different groups and organizations in the Tahoe Basin and frankly, throughout the State. The short answer to that is yes, it is beneficial; because the more people you can get involved in trying to come up with solutions to very difficult and

challenging problems, the better. There are a lot of challenges here in the Tahoe Basin. The more people and groups you can have working collectively to try to find answers to those things and solutions—I think is worth it.

Chair Daly:

Understood. Follow up—but you do not see it dominated by, “We just got to get more people, more people, more people?” Or is it “No, we need to manage the people that are coming in a fashion that makes everybody’s experience better.” When I say everybody, that means the people coming and the people who are here.

Mr. Mergell:

Yes, I think that is been a lot of—that is also—not just bringing people to the area, but the spaces people can inhabit around the Lake are finite. There are only so many spaces you can put people at Sand Harbor. If they show up, there has to be some other place for them to go. We have to work together to try to figure out how we are going to move those people to different locations; because very few of them are going to show up, get to Sand Harbor, for instance, find out that it is full, and go home. They have already loaded up the car with everything they need for the day. They are not going to turn around and go home. We have to work with our partners around the Lake to figure out—when we are full, what do we do?

Now, we at State Parks—we do not advertise Sand Harbor. We do not advertise any of our parks that are up here. We have worked with Travel Nevada to not advertise specifically for Sand Harbor and Valley of Fire, because we have more than enough visitors at both of those locations. We do not need to get more people to either of those two parks. From our end of things, when it comes to advertising, we are not actively trying to get any more people into either of those places.

Chair Daly:

Understood, but that group is not necessarily—that is not the focus. The focus is to manage the people here. That was it. I appreciate that. Any other questions, Committee? I think that is it, thank you.

Assemblyman Gray:

Very quick—it is actually more of a suggestion. I am creating my account, like the Senator did, and it says “waitlist notification;” it has got a drop down carrot where it wants you to select—the only option is email—99.9 percent of America now uses texting. You go to restaurants, and they text you when your table is ready. I would like to suggest you guys put that in there, because that is probably a much easier way for people to stay in communication with the system.

Mr. Mergell:

Duly noted.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. We are going to let you go. Thank you for the presentation. We will close that agenda item.

AGENDA ITEM VI—UPDATE BY THE TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY REGARDING LAKE TAHOE BASIN AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMS

Chair Daly:

We will move to Item VI, update by the TRPA regarding Lake Tahoe Basin affordable housing programs. Julie Regan and Karen Fink, when you are ready.

Julie Regan, Executive Director, TRPA:

Thank you, Chair Daly, Members of the Committee, staff, and the public. Good afternoon, with me here today is Karen Fink, a Principal Planner in our Regional Planning Department at TRPA and our Housing Program Manager. I am so pleased to be here with spring in the air and that delicious familiar vanilla smell of our tall pines with the Lake being a resplendent blue. And yes, snow is in the forecast for tomorrow; it is spring in the mountains. I wanted to say how much I appreciated the great dialogue of this Committee and the attention you all are showing to Lake Tahoe, and to the community members who have come and spoken on the record here before you and at our TRPA Governing Board Meetings. I want to assure those Members; I consider them my fellow community members in the Lake. I want to make sure it is on the record that we do hear these concerns—take them seriously; I can assure you that our Governing Board does as well. We actually have two members of our Board here: the Director of DCNR, James Settelmeyer; and Mayor Cody Bass of the City of South Lake Tahoe. They are on our Board, and you will be hearing from the Mayor a little later in the program. We also have Cadence Matijevich from Washoe County, who is here on behalf of Member Hill, Washoe County Board of County Commissioners representative on TRPA's Board. I wanted to say that up front, and tie the presentation we are making with the last presentation a bit, and harken back to the conversation we had around the change in Tahoe. (Agenda Item VI)

Senator Titus, I have been in Tahoe for 30 years, and I have seen very different swings of public engagement over time. I do feel like this is a level of frustration that has been building for many years. I want to commit that we are here to work through these and to listen and to try to problem solve together. Areas around the world have been grappling with these very challenging topics, as evidenced by the complexity we just listened to from our great presenter from Nevada State Parks, Bob Mergell. These are complicated issues, and we have to work together to solve them holistically and in a comprehensive fashion. The example you heard about the reservation system, just now, I think Chair Daly speaks to your question earlier: what is TRPA's role in this? We are in a shared collaborative environment with two states, ten federal agencies, six local jurisdictions, the Washoe Tribe, the nonprofit community, the science community, our many residents and visitors; and our role is to share in that problem solving. Years ago, we helped organize a tour that went down to Muir Woods, and we collaborated with the State Golden Gate Park Conservancy and the folks in the Park Service in San Francisco, and looked at their reservation system. They were doing that even before COVID. Nevada officials attended, California, Forest Service, and TRPA helped organize that, and it really put on the map the need to look at these kinds of more innovative systems, because there are places around the world that are doing that, that we can benefit from learning about. That is an example of how we are not in charge of that. We do not have any authority on State lands and how State Parks or the Forest Service—. We have to harmonize our regional plan; we do not own that property. But we work together, and we use our leadership under the Compact to help find solutions. One of the big challenges we have—we know we have emerging threats and many challenges, and one of them is housing.

Today, the focus of our presentation, which I will start and then Karen will join, we are here to talk about that critical link between housing and our precious environment at the Lake. Lake Tahoe's environment has attracted people from across the globe that have moved to live here. We have a saying in Tahoe: Come for the winters and stay for the summers. Many residents have come to Tahoe for one ski season and never left; many of my staff are in that boat. You know, you could at one time build a modest career locally, afford to buy a home, and raise a family. And unfortunately, this Tahoe dream is becoming harder and harder to achieve. Not just here in Tahoe, but in many, many resorts around the country, in part due to the rising housing costs. Our beautiful paradise is unaffordable to many who want to call Tahoe home. When housing prices cause a loss in our community, the environment suffers, for example, from more people driving into the Basin; and we are going to talk about the commute patterns that have shifted in recent years. Our strategies and goals for protecting the Lake's clarity are the same that can promote affordable housing for all of our residents.

The Compact has come up several times today. In our previous discussions, the Compact guides our work, it is our mandate at the TRPA. We are one of the most unique interstate compacts for natural resources in the country, and not one is exactly structured in the way ours is. It gives TRPA the mandate to achieve environmental standards called thresholds, and mandates also that we allow for orderly growth and development that are consistent with our environmental goals. Therein lies a lot of the tension. We do not have a moratorium on growth. We have to balance private property rights and development in a very methodical, measured manner. That is part of what we are going to be talking about today. There have been unintended consequences from the systems that we have here.

Affordable and workforce housing is called out in TRPA's Regional Plan, and that is part of that orderly growth and development; specifically, there are housing needs and requirements in our planning documents of the two states. How we plan for housing, where housing goes, all of that helps get us closer to meeting our environmental threshold standards and the goals of our Regional Plan. I do want to emphasize again, that plan was updated in 2012, with thousands of members of the community that participated in shaping that plan and the two states came together, our local jurisdictions. That is the direction TRPA has been implementing of more than ten years ago—over the last decade. That is clearly what we are doing today in our direction. What we are going to share about some of the unintended consequences with you, is that in capping development and growth in the Basin, and we have had unintended consequences in the—common sense, supply and demand; we have limited growth and that has driven some prices up. We are trying to modernize these policies, and make sure we do improve the Lake as part of that process. We are looking at what we call redevelopment, small "r," and looking at outdated legacy development that has been frozen in time. All you need to do is drive around the Tahoe Basin to see examples of outdated development that need modernizing and updating in terms of environmental compliance. How can we do that in providing new housing opportunities and economic revitalization for communities that have been struggling? We have lost population in the Basin in the last 20 years. Remember, Northern Nevada and Northern California have been growing. Therein lies the conflict of fewer local residents that can afford to live here, and move outside the Basin in areas surrounding the Basin that are growing. How do we manage that? That is at the heart of what we are talking about. Layer on top of that emergent threats from climate change, microplastics, wildfire, invasive species, all the things we have heard from the public comment, and you have a humongous amount of challenge here in the Basin.

Affordability is another challenge. Studies have shown about less than 30 percent of our local residents can afford the median priced home. Like many places in America, families

that work in Lake Tahoe are having trouble achieving that American dream of home ownership and building wealth in their homes. It used to be that you could afford a home and have some stability here in the Basin. For most people, that dream has not been a reality in recent years. We are taking a hard look through the leadership of our Board at what role TRPA's regulations play in that process, because there are many factors that drive housing costs; land values being one of them. We are taking a hard look at what our growth caps and development standards have had on affordability in the Basin.

I mentioned commuting patterns. We know that roughly half of local workers commute into the Basin, and that is actually higher depending on where you are in the Lake. The north end of the Lake in Placer County, that is 60 percent; and with that comes less quality of life for people that are coming to drive. It brings more emissions, more traffic on the roads, more congestion. You are hearing the frustration of that from the local residents, because you have a perfect storm of rising temperatures in neighboring areas, and people want to flock to the Basin to escape the heat. You have got more people commuting in, and you have these conflicts that we are trying to manage.

That loss of year-round population also changes the very fabric of our communities. We have also lost the ability for local workers that provide vital emergency services like firefighters, police, emergency response—they have to commute in from out of the Basin, which can compromise response time and just basic services for local residents and visitors. You have also heard about fire evacuation, and that is a concern we all share. I will share a piece of bright news. Hearing that concern over the last year, especially since Caldor—over the last couple of years—in the Basin TRPA took some leadership and applied for a grant from the United States Department of Transportation. It is called the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation Program (PROTECT) Grant. It is a long acronym that is basically about building resiliency in the face of emerging threats from climate. We are going to collaborate with our local first responders, police, fire, and the fire service agencies, which are many in the Basin, to build out a more robust evacuation planning system. We are not responsible for that; our first responders are; but we are trying to support that with the new funds we have been able to acquire from the federal government. So, good news on that front. I have a lot more to share, but I am going to turn it over to Karen Fink, who is TRPA's Principal Planner, as I mentioned, and she is going to tell you about how our agency and our Governing Board is really trying to attack this housing affordability issue head on, because we do believe it is a huge crisis we are all facing. Karen, take it away.

Karen Fink, Principal Planner, TRPA:

Good afternoon, Committee, Chair. Julie mentioned how many of our workers cannot afford to live in Lake Tahoe. This graph shows the median home price steadily increasing, which has been happening not just in our area, but in other areas as well. The median price of a home in Tahoe has tripled in the last ten years. It has gone from about \$345,000 in 2012 to \$950,000 in 2021. It is now nearly a \$1 million, which is basically completely out of reach for almost all of our local workers. The average household income in Lake Tahoe is about \$90,000.

Another frequently cited statistic is the number of empty homes in Lake Tahoe. Over the past 40 years, the percentage of homes that are occupied by full-time workers has stayed pretty consistent at slightly less than 50 percent. Seasonal- or recreational-use accounts for about half of all housing in the Tahoe Basin; that is how it has been for a very long time. Although we have seen that second home market eroding slightly more into our primary home market. In some parts of the Lake, that second home percentage is much higher.

The next few slides start to get into strategies and solutions. When we are developing policies to address the housing shortage, the work is grounded in data and the actual needs of our community. We have data that is based on regional needs assessments that were completed through collaborative efforts of the local jurisdictions; TRPA; community collaborative, such as the Tahoe Prosperity Center; the Mountain Housing Council; and other partners. The Tahoe Prosperity Center and Washoe County work together to develop a housing needs assessment for the Washoe-Tahoe part of the Basin. These numbers are of course estimates, we are not updating them every month, but they serve as a general guidepost. We are looking at a shortage of around 5,000 to 6,000 housing units in the short term, not to mention the long term.

As we have mentioned, addressing the housing shortage also helps us meet our environmental goals as a whole. More housing in Tahoe means less people commuting to work over the mountains, clogging our roadways, and harming Lake clarity. Housing projects also help us update that outdated development that is in our region and in our centers. A lot of the existing development does not have appropriate stormwater treatment. When we get these projects that we are trying to incentivize with affordable housing and hopefully some mixed use; we get that new stormwater treatment. Our Regional Plan is, as Julie mentioned, very focused on redevelopment, getting that outdated development out of our center, so we can revitalize, create walkable communities, and treat storm water.

Now, I want to talk about the solutions that TRPA and partners have been bringing to bear; some of these may be similar to strategies that other parts of the State are adopting. The strategies are really focused on how do we actually reduce costs to get affordable housing on the ground and preserve the housing we already have while achieving environmental gain. In 2020, TRPA's Governing Board adopted what we call the Tahoe Living Strategic Priority, and that is to look at the role TRPA can have in reducing barriers to affordable housing and meeting environmental goals through that process. This has always been a partnership. In some ways, the things TRPA can do may seem kind of small, but we think they will be a catalyst for our partners to be able to take much bigger action. For instance, TRPA does not provide housing ourselves—we do not build it, but local jurisdictions often do.

To tackle this problem, the Board appointed a working group that has representatives from those affected by the housing crisis, representatives from the environmental community, as well as those with experience trying to provide that housing—to advise staff on the hurdles. Every partner on this page and some not on this page have been doing significant work to address the crisis. Some examples of progress, Placer County's Workforce Housing Preservation Program (WHPP) and the Lease to Locals Incentive Grant Program have resulted in over 100 homes for local workers; and Lease to Locals encourages second homeowners to rent to locals. Multiple jurisdictions in the Basin are using this program or are planning to use it; Washoe County being the latest to take advantage of that program. Other partners are providing matching funds or land donations. You heard from Jean Diaz from the Saint Joseph Community Land Trust. They are partnering on the Sugar Pine Village, which is in the process of delivering 248 units of deed restricted affordable housing. We have nonprofits that are getting homeless Veterans off the streets. Other things local jurisdictions do are simply updating their area plans to take advantage of the housing incentives. Both Douglas County and Washoe County are preparing updates to their area plans currently to take advantage of the incentives in the regional plan.

Overall, the group and TRPA are looking at a wide variety of solutions to the housing crisis and this slide highlights just a few of them. I will get a little bit more into these as we go on, but the partner and public input we received during the work, informed a three-phase

approach to updating TRPA's regulations to housing. Out of that Tahoe Living Strategic Priority I showed you, that group recommended three phases. The Governing Board has already approved the first two phases—or has adopted the amendments that were developed for phase one and two. Phase one incentivized accessory dwelling units and allowed accessory dwelling units on all residential parcels; they had previously been limited only to parcels of one acre or greater in size. However, those regulations currently only apply on the California side.

Phase two looked at lowering costs to build affordable and workforce housing through zoning and development standards. For example, allowing more flexibility for height for deed restricted units only, allowing more flexibility with the number of units allowed on a parcel—not allowing more growth overall, but allowing more units on the individual parcels, and lifting or reducing parking requirements.

The third phase, which we will be launching this summer, will plan for equitable and sustainable housing that improves climate resilience, specifically through looking at improvements to TRPA's development rights system. Always maintaining our environmental thresholds, if not achieving a greater level of environmental improvement through these amendments. We are also undertaking an environmental review as part of this, which we always do. Part of that will determine if there are opportunities for streamlining projects that meet both environmental and affordable housing goals. Another important part of this third phase is really building capacity for ongoing meaningful community engagement. With that, I will turn it back over to Julie.

Ms. Regan:

I am going to wrap this up and then look forward to your questions. Finally, we have come to the Committee to talk about areas where we could use your support and answer your questions on this very critical subject. There are actually many similarities between California and Nevada in terms of housing legislation and policy, accessory dwelling unit, development unit incentives—as Karen mentioned is one area of commonality—affordable housing funds would be another. The main difference between each state's approach is in California, the rules tend to be applied to all jurisdictions. While Nevada housing requirements often are focused in specific areas of the State—in metropolitan areas with large populations. We welcome any conversations with you about how your Committee would like to engage on this subject and try to tackle these crucial problems that we need to solve together. With that, we will turn it back to you, Chair, and be happy to take your questions.

Chair Daly:

Committee? Who wants to go first? Senator Titus.

Senator Titus:

Again, it is not just in Lake Tahoe that there is an issue with affordable housing, it is throughout our nation, especially in our State. It is interesting on some of your solutions. I certainly think you are trying to do what you can with original ideas. You mentioned on one of your slides, the one that you had the Tahoe Living Housing and Community Revitalization Working Group. The comment was that you leased to locals; that was not listed on that, but you did make the comment about Lease to Locals, and I am wondering is there—and the groups that are helping that—is there is an incentive for a homeowner who does not occupy it, except for maybe the summer time, or maybe they do not occupy it

anyway; it was just an investment and maybe their parents had it or whatever. Do they get some sort of incentive to lease to a local then? They get some reimbursement, but then they lease at the set rate.

Ms. Fink:

Lease to Locals is a private organization; it is not run by TRPA, but that is correct. The way they do it, is they basically work with the different local jurisdictions to have a pool of funding that offers a financial incentive to second homeowners who will lease the home or rent the home to a household that meets certain income requirements or workforce requirements. It is different in Placer County in South Lake Tahoe. They get a financial incentive for the number of people living in the home.

Senator Titus:

Thank you for that, because I know it has been tougher; law enforcement cannot afford to live in these communities and the teachers cannot afford it. I know groups are looking at that, employers are looking at giving a bonus to help them pay for the rent and all, but this is a different side of that equation; so I appreciate that. The other comment that was made was the regulation regarding the accessory dwelling units and the regulations mandated that there had to be a minimum of one acre for that. Was that on the California side only? Can you explain that a little bit more?

Ms. Fink:

We updated our TRPA regulations around accessory dwelling units in 2021. Prior to that change, TRPA only allowed accessory dwelling units on parcels of greater than one acre; so there were very few parcels where you could actually build an accessory dwelling unit. In 2021, we changed the rule to allow accessory dwelling units on nearly all residential parcels; up to two accessory dwelling units per parcel. Although we brought that change forward as a regional change, the Governing Board ended up only approving it on the California side, because we heard from quite a few Nevada residents that they were concerned these accessory dwelling units would become short-term rentals—vacation rentals. On the California side, California State law prevents accessory dwelling units from being used as short-term rentals, and Nevada had no such laws. What the Governing Board decided to do is only approve it on the California side for now, Washoe County and Douglas County have their area plans. The Board basically said that those two counties should develop appropriate accessory dwelling unit policies that are tailored to the needs of their communities and bring those changes back in their area plans and then we will adopt them.

Senator Titus:

Those regulations then are based on county ordinances, not on NRS?

Ms. Fink:

My understanding of the NRS, is that it does encourage accessory dwelling units, but it does not mandate local jurisdictions to allow them everywhere. I could be mistaken about that. But that was my understanding, and I do not think there is a restriction that they cannot be used as short-term rentals.

Senator Titus:

Chair, do we have Legal staff here with us today? Do you know the statute then?

Ms. Sturdivant, previously identified:

I am looking it up now, and I will follow up with the Committee once I have that information.

Senator Titus:

Alright, because I think that is really important regarding the obstacles or who is in charge; and is there a specific NRS that states that accessory dwelling units cannot have those or is that based on the county ordinances—individual counties decide those things. There is a big difference there.

Ms. Fink:

We can look into that as well.

Ms. Regan:

Senator, if I may, just to build on that. I think the point you are raising, it really illustrates the complexity, jurisdiction to jurisdiction. For example, the Lease to Locals program is administered at the jurisdiction level. The City of South Lake Tahoe has a program, I am sure they would be happy to speak to their program. On the North Shore, they have their own program through Placer County. They also have down payment assistance. There is a number of individualized programs our local partners are doing. We are trying to establish that regional framework that encourages and supports that at the regional level.

Accessory dwelling units—there were probably 100 bills that became law in California in the last five to ten years on housing; and accessory dwelling units had numerous laws. What happened is California properties were being mandated to support that—local jurisdictions were being mandated to support more accessory dwelling units. As Karen said, we had a rule that prohibited those on properties under an acre of size. That was our first priority, to harmonize those requirements; but we have to work within our development caps system. It gets very complicated because, as we have heard, we are working within that overall umbrella of a certain amount of development rights. We are looking at how do we incentivize more affordable units that is harmonious with that. We have something called bonus units that are only for affordable housing, if they are deed restricted. In California, you cannot rent an accessory dwelling unit as a short-term rental, per State law. That is the complexity we are trying to manage.

Senator Titus:

You say, “We had a one-acre thing.” Was that “we” being Nevada, or “we” being California?

Ms. Regan:

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

Senator Titus:

Very good, thank you. I am looking forward to more details from a legal standpoint on what the rules are and who has the authority, and what NRS chapter that is in. Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Understood and I had notes on that very question as well, so we would have got to it either way. Vice Chair on Zoom, do you have any questions?

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

I am good; thank you.

Chair Daly:

What I think I heard you say was you guys had a rule on the one acre, and you got rid of that. California already had rules that accessory dwellings cannot be used as short-term rentals; Nevada did not have that. We are still deciding if it is an NRS issue or a county-by-county ordinance type of issue on that. We will get the answer to that. If it is a State issue, we may take a look at something on that.

When you had your list of people you are working with up there, I know there is a Nevada Housing Authority. I know there is something similar in California. Are you working with any of the housing authorities? I met with the Housing Authority, they want to talk to me on some other issue and various things, and I said you should reach out to these people and talk to them, because everything I know about how you try to get to affordable—low income is a separate issue. Then you guys had the achievable. From what I understand when I asked the questions before, there is criteria on how much you can make—and how much an owner of a property can—or the person going to rent—how much income they have, to qualify for the affordable housing. There are tiers. Achievable was a different issue, and I think a little more complicated. Low-income housing is not really in the equation; that is usually a federal program that works with that. But even on the affordable housing, where you say you have to make only this much money in order to be able to get into the space regardless, there was nothing on the other side in your plan that I saw that the housing authorities and various things try to work on that gets that developer with any type of incentive to develop or make that type of housing available—whether it is multifamily housing, condos, whatever. I can only rent to people that make this much money, but I want to develop it and I want to make the most that I can, and the market rate is much higher than that. So I have no incentive to rent to these people; I am going to rent it to the people that can pay more. The mechanism that the housing authorities use—and I do not know where you guys are at on this—low-income tax credits—there are other programs so that I rent to this person at a lower amount because that is all they can afford, but I am still getting market rates with some other mechanism. The way you guys have it from how it has been explained to me is without that other part, it is never going to work. You only have so much space. So, answer that first.

Ms. Regan:

Absolutely, Senator. You are hitting on a very key point, and I will let Karen speak to the collaboration with housing authorities and the details you laid out. But from a big picture standpoint, if you think of it from a macro—very coarse level, we have a limited land base, we have caps on development, and we have land coverage—where every square foot of coverage is counted, and you can only cover so much of a lot. The market is in large homes.

The market—the private sector will go where the market is most profitable, to your point. The whole idea of the suite of policy changes the Board has already taken; and we are looking at this new phase—which is just kicking off the environmental review of that phase and the whole conceptual ideas are beginning. How can we steer the market to build more affordable units, and what kind of incentives will it take? Our Board has taken the step of allowing an extra story of height, for example, or other incentives, while at the same time getting environmental benefits of these rundown properties. The density that Karen spoke of—that is one way. Then maybe Karen you can speak to the housing authority conversation.

Ms. Fink:

I did want to add on to what Julie was saying. Builders who are building deed-restricted housing in the Tahoe region, in either California or Nevada, are still eligible for those incentives you talked about, like low-income tax credits and things like that. At the TRPA, what we focus on—we do not have those kinds of programs. What we are focusing on are the incentives Julie talked about, such as the additional height we recently approved for deed-restricted units only. To speak to the Nevada Housing Authority, they actually are not on our working group, although that is a very good idea. I have worked with them before to get an understanding of how things work in Nevada and things like that. But a closer relationship with them could be good.

Chair Daly:

I appreciate that. You mentioned on the other part that I was going to say, but I will let you answer first. There is only so much space. You have a map and there are the lines on where the Basin is and that is it. Nobody I have ever talked to wants to see development and say, "Oh, we could just go further up the hill and do that." Not going to happen. There is even a more finite amount that has already been used for housing this, et cetera. We are trying to pull some of that out of that use and get it into the preservation/conservation arena. Then there is even a smaller subset of land where it has already been disturbed, you are in city centers, of course, et cetera, where it is already suitable for development or can be used for that. When you put the other restrictions and various things on the developer, whoever it might be, wanting to use and develop his land to his highest best use, which is their right and various things. But I know when you are talking about Washoe County or the City of Reno, City of Sparks, they have less tools than TRPA does on the Tahoe regional planning development. You guys get to say, "I get to look at this first," the environmental impact, preservation, et cetera; "and your highest, best use is never going to happen, too bad, so sad; but you can do this." In other words, you are not going to have single family housing developments. The people who want to live up here and work up here are going to be in condos, apartments, or something else. You still have to make that developer—in order to want to do that on whatever parcel he may have, he has got to be able to get the market rate; there has to be that gap in there through the housing authorities and low-income tax credits and all of those. It is an odd system that has been developed and I am not sure it is efficient or anything else, but that is how it works. If you can say— income levels are the only people eligible to rent it, and the developer is not going to build it for those income levels, unless he gets that incentive someplace else. I am not seeing that part in your plan yet. Maybe you are in the early stages, but it seems to me there is only a finite amount of space. You gotta make those spaces available. They have already been developed once; you gotta have that gap in there to get someone to build it. I know people do not want to have more here—but people are here already, and we need the space; and teachers should not have to drive up from Reno to teach at a school in Incline Village or

South Lake Tahoe, or wherever it might be. They should be able to afford to live in the community where they work. But I do not think we are there, not at \$980,000.

Ms. Regan:

No—Senator, thank you—we are definitely not there; we have a long way to go. As Karen showed, the housing needs assessments that our various community organizations have done have documented the need at those various income tiers that you laid out. So there is a need for very low income people. There is a need for moderate housing. Then there is that definition called achievable housing. This is what Karen and other people in the community call that missing middle. What happens is firefighters, our utility workers, even health care workers in the various hospital systems—they make too much money to qualify for incentives for some of those programs. That is the idea of the achievable definition. There are these different tiers we are trying to address and targeting how we improve the quality of housing in the Basin. We have taken walking tours both in King's Beach, through the grid, in various communities around Stateline, around the backside of the casinos—and on the California side, the Douglas County side; it is unacceptable—the state of housing that our local workers in our local communities are living in. Some families are living two and three and sleeping in shifts. It is not acceptable. What we are trying to do is move that market from building that single family home in a neighborhood, into a town center that could be more duplexes, more triplexes. That is really the goal, because right now, there is not enough financial incentive to do that; and subsidies, I think to your point, is really very key. The Sugar Pine Village will be the largest affordable housing apartment complex in the Basin at 248 units. It would not have been possible if the State of California did not donate land through the California Tahoe Conservancy, and the City has worked very hard to qualify for additional funds. Various jurisdictions are looking at land—taking the land costs out of the equation, because it still does not pencil out in many aspects. Karen may have additional detail on that.

Ms. Fink:

As part of this upcoming phase, one of the things we are going to certainly be looking at is in part how our development rights system, which requires one single residential unit of use to build a house, regardless of if it is a tiny apartment or a ten room mansion, that takes the same development right. What we are seeing is once people get a hold of that development right—which costs money, they are going to build the biggest house they possibly can. That is in some ways why we are seeing these things that are distressing, like large luxury condominiums going in, because I think—as you mentioned, that is what makes money. That is one of the things we are specifically going to be looking at in this next phase is—that system was developed to manage growth and to manage the environmental impacts. But when you are doing it—this one unit is the same regardless of the size of the house, that maybe there is other impacts there that we need to capture.

Chair Daly:

Understood, and I guess you guys are in a different position, the TRPA—both sides of the Lake. I have seen the City of Reno, Washoe County where they say—the people who come in, “We do not want this; it is going to be horrible. It is on wetlands.” It is just that they have the right to develop it. I think I have mentioned this before to you guys. So, the City Council voted it down and says, “No, we are not going to do it.” It has been through the regional governing plan; there were all these steps they had to go through. They have been approved, and they get to the City Council; City Council says no. They get sued because they had their rules that they set up. It met the land use requirements. They met

all of the other—drag your feet. We will put in a park for you and pay for a fire substation, or all of the things they extract out of developers. Then when they said no, the developer wins those most of the time, because they do not have any rule in place other than “people did not like it” or “I just do not like it,” and they lose. I think you guys are in a different position; I think you could tell that person who has got the right and you are going to build the ten room mansion, or I am going to build high-end condominiums. I think you guys have more teeth in your rules to tell those people, “No, but you can do this.” You are in a unique situation. Your rules are different, and you can trim those development rights in a different way. That is all I am saying is stop approving the high-end condominiums and get some affordable housing. Short answer. All right. Any other questions, Committee? [There were no additional questions.] With that, we will let you go.

AGENDA ITEM VII—PRESENTATION BY THE TAHOE PROSPERITY CENTER REGARDING COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY IN THE TAHOE BASIN

Chair Daly:

We will move on to Item VII, presentation by the Tahoe Prosperity Center regarding community and economic prosperity in the Tahoe Basin. We have Bill Chan.

Bill Chan, Program Manager, Tahoe Prosperity Center:

Thank you, Chair, and the rest of the Committee Members for allowing me to speak today. I would like to begin by speaking about our organization. The Tahoe Prosperity Center serves as the Community and Economic Development Organization across the Tahoe Basin, serving communities in four counties across both states and in Washoe and Douglas on the Nevada side.

(Agenda Item VII) [Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/About/Contact.>]

Collaborating with jurisdictions and organizations throughout the region, we are working to make sure residents across the socioeconomic spectrum have opportunities to thrive; while at the same time making sure to preserve the environment for current and future generations. Envision Tahoe is our economic development and resiliency program, which I will speak on more shortly. Alert Tahoe or Alert Wildfire is a program we have worked closely with the UNR Seismology Lab on, to install fire detection cameras throughout the Tahoe Basin and in many areas throughout Northern Nevada. The system has mitigated many potential fire disasters and has become an essential tool for fire professionals. With housing, I will be brief, but my brevity does not indicate the lack of severity in the housing issue here. But I did want to note that employers of all sizes—small businesses to our anchor employers like the hospitals or our government agencies—often cite the most pressing challenge for them is not having housing for their employees. Finally, Connected Tahoe is our broadband program. As anyone who has spent much time in Tahoe has experienced, Internet and cell phone connectivity can be scarce. Businesses and students need reliable connectivity to excel, and emergency response relies on this infrastructure to keep people safe.

Here is a little bit about the economic overview. As a region, we are working to create a Tahoe economy that can literally and figuratively weather the storm. By supporting growth in industries that yield better paying jobs and make sense for this region, Tahoe can be more resilient and provide more opportunities for working families and individuals to thrive.

Here are some Tahoe-wide metrics. Annually the total economic activity is over \$5 billion. There are over 6,000 private employers. Of note, the tourism-based jobs account for over 60 percent of the economic activity in the region. What we would like to do is lean into other sectors and diversify, notably the health and wellness sector and green innovation. Commuters—as you have seen, over 50 percent of Tahoe employees commute into the Basin; which again just underscores the housing issue. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022–2023, the Transit Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue was over \$60 million for the Basin.

This slide shows the job concentration by industry for Lake Tahoe and neighboring communities. The big takeaway here is that an outsized portion of the Tahoe economy is in tourism and hospitality. As you can see with the Reno portion of this graphic, we have seen that Northern Nevada has found a lot of success in diversifying from a heavily tourist-based economy. As the region has experienced economic shocks, the economic downturn, pandemic, natural disasters—Northern Nevada has done a better job at withstanding these negative economic effects and bounces back more quickly. We would like to see Tahoe move in that direction.

Here are some statistics for the Nevada side. These TOT figures are for the FY 2022–2023. There are over 14,000 residents in the Tahoe Basin within the Washoe and Douglas counties. Most importantly is this little section on income. There are low-income communities in Tahoe. Tahoe is not homogeneous. In the latest American community survey, the median individual income in Stateline, Nevada was under \$30,000 and over half of the residents there are Latino. Too often neighborhoods like Stateline are overlooked due to their proximity to high-income neighborhoods. I think that is important to note.

Envision Tahoe is the regional effort to create a more balanced and sustainable economy for Tahoe going forward. In 2022, the Envision Tahoe Prosperity Playbook was produced by a coalition of community leaders, including those representing Washoe and Douglas County. The playbook outlines short-term and long-term goals along with associated actions to achieve these goals. Four long-term goals: (1) strengthen key industries like health and wellness, green innovation, forest health; (2) build skill pathways for upward mobility by working with the education system, the community college, and employers to make sure students are equipped with the skills and traits necessary to be competitive in tomorrow's economy; (3) jumpstart the innovation ecosystem; and (4) shape the enabling environment.

One of these points, the innovation ecosystem—we have been able to deploy one of these plays through a program called Tahoe Inc. Tahoe Inc. is a program that provides new and seasoned entrepreneurs, small business owners, and people curious about starting their own business with an outlet to get directed to the resources they need and a platform to workshop ideas and challenges with other business-minded individuals who may have been in their shoes before. The Nevada side round tables are regularly held in Incline Village and in Zephyr Cove. In 2023, we had over 300 entrepreneurs participate. Regularly we are directing them to other resources like the Small Business Administration (SBA), Nevada Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), and counselors. We have also done a good job at teaching entrepreneurs how to connect with funding sources and resources like StartupNV. That is my presentation; thanks for the time, and I am happy to take any questions.

Chair Daly:

Committee, any questions? Vice Chair on Zoom, do you have any questions?

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

I am good. Thank you.

Chair Daly:

All right. I have one. Similar to what I asked about the Council on the Destination Stewardship. How are you organized? What are you a subgroup of, or is it mainly businesses? I see your partners are the three counties in California, but I see Washoe County is involved as well. How much do you overlap with the other things that are already going on?

Mr. Chan:

The primary effort of Envision Tahoe has concluded with the production of the Envision Tahoe Playbook. I think that is a good question that is maybe kind of wavering in the air now, as a lot of these plays require significant funding and staff to move the ball forward. I think that is the big question on what jurisdictions are involved in that, where the funding comes from, and who those players are. But we are still in constant contact with the counties, TRPA, and the other players that were involved in creating this plan.

Chair Daly:

How long have you been in existence for the idea of the plan? So, when the plan was created?

Mr. Chan:

The plan is created in 2022. That effort started before my time with the Prosperity Center. But I think the real work—

Chair Daly:

So, was it established with the goal of developing the plan that you did?

Mr. Chan:

Correct, yes.

Chair Daly:

Now that the plan is developed, what do you do now?

Mr. Chan:

A lot of that is on the different jurisdictions, as well as anchor employers to take the pieces of the plan which—on those slides you can find the full playbook and different white papers on it. It is on the local jurisdictions and leaders to prioritize themselves, what pieces of that plan they want to employ, and how they want to get that done.

Chair Daly:

You tried to help them develop a plan—if you were going to use the connectivity thing, that is an easy thing. People understand that. Here are the steps you would take, who you would talk to. There is a plan to move forward, and now it would be up to the counties; city; State; the Compact; somebody to implement it.

Mr. Chan:

Correct. A big part of our work is for this to have local flexibility. Here is the plan. Here are some actions that a wide swath of Tahoe leaders have identified make sense for the wider region. Now, you as a local government or agency can identify what you think makes sense for you, what makes sense for your budget, and have at it.

Chair Daly:

Essentially it is a tool to be referenced. Somebody has already done this work on an idea, if somebody is moving forward with implementation on this; but it is jurisdiction by jurisdiction.

Mr. Chan:

As with most things in Tahoe, it can be jurisdiction by jurisdiction; but there is plenty of overlap. I would say it is a little of bucket A, a little bit of bucket B.

Chair Daly:

We cannot go back in time and start over—one jurisdiction. I wanted to understand the genesis, goal, and application. Senator Scheible has a question.

Senator Scheible:

You may have addressed this, but where do you get the majority of your funding?

Mr. Chan:

The funding is often from—are you saying the funding for the Tahoe Prosperity Center, as an organization? We get a lot of funding from the different jurisdictions we represent, whether it is Washoe, Douglas, El Dorado, or Placer counties on the California side. There are private contributions from employers or some of the anchor employers in the area. Different foundations are funding us as well, and we often are awarded or earn different grants and government contracts.

Senator Scheible:

How do you measure your effectiveness?

Mr. Chan:

I think that is one thing we, as an organization, have wanted to improve upon is being better at demonstrating the measurable impacts we are having. But for instance, in Washoe County, we had led an affordable housing initiative funded by the County, and that plan that was produced was accepted by the Board of County Commissioners; staff have already begun implementing pieces of that. As Karen from TRPA had mentioned, there is already a piece of this plan that was accepted that is very close to implementation in the

Lease to Locals plan. While I do not have any hard data on Tahoe residents that have been impacted immediately. But we produced a plan that was approved by a bipartisan Board, and it is already being implemented. I think that is an area where we have been effective.

Senator Scheible:

I will pitch you a softball here. So, you have not managed to get anybody housed in the Tahoe Basin. But the Tahoe Prosperity Center has been around for five years. So, tell us about your successes.

Mr. Chan:

I would not say we have been unsuccessful in getting people housed, as our work was a big part of these other Lease to Local programs that happened in the other jurisdictions. So, over 100 residents have already been housed there. We are a big part of a large multifamily development that is in progress in South Lake Tahoe—Sugar Pine Village; which I think is going to be 248 low-income units. There is another success. We are also a key partner with Lake Tahoe Community College’s housing development project, which they have broken ground on—a low-income student housing facility.

Senator Scheible:

Thank you.

Chair Daly:

I do not see any other questions. I appreciate your presentation, thank you for your time.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—PRESENTATION BY THE CITY OF SOUTH LAKE TAHOE REGARDING ISSUES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE LAKE TAHOE BASIN

Chair Daly:

That will bring us to Item VIII. We are happy to have a presentation by the City of South Lake Tahoe regarding issues and priorities for the Lake. We heard from the various counties in Nevada, the three at one of our first meetings. We are happy to hear from you, and being from Nevada we joke about our brothers in California—we do not care about anything they are doing in California, et cetera—but I think this might be the one exception—where we do. We want to hear, because what you guys are doing, and we are doing—we need to mesh. Unfortunately, we probably would never be able to actually go to your City to have one of our meetings there, because we have to conduct our business in the State of Nevada, but we are happy to have you here. Please proceed, and looking forward to hearing what you have to say.

Cody Bass, Mayor, City of South Lake Tahoe, California:

Thank you, Senator, and thank you for the invitation here today. We really think this is so important for us to have that bi-state collaboration, especially at the local level, for us to continue working together through our time in the future. Some quick history about the City (Agenda Item VIII).

The City of South Lake Tahoe was founded in 1965, to create local control for police, fire, and snow removal at the time. Obviously, since then, in our 60-year history, we have seen a lot of development, a lot of change in Lake Tahoe. That is why we are here. I represent as

the Mayor of South Lake Tahoe. I have been in Tahoe for 27 years. I am also a business owner of 20 years in the Basin. I also serve on the TTD Board for the last 5 years and just joined on the TRPA Board. With that, I will turn it to Joe.

Joseph Irvin, City Manager, City of South Lake Tahoe, California:

Thank you, Mayor Bass, Chair Daly, and Members of the Committee. I have been the City Manager for the last 4 years, in local government for 20 plus years, and have lived in South Lake for a total of 7 years. It is a privilege and honor to be here with you today to talk about the things we are doing, and the ways we can advocate for positive change and enhanced collaboration across the state line. There was one comment I want to correct earlier that came up about the evacuation from the Caldor Fire taking multiple days; it took no more than four hours, just for the record.

Mayor Bass:

Today we wanted to talk about the purpose—and I think you addressed it, Senator. We are very grateful for this invitation to speak. I think the collaboration of us and the state line, and the challenges it creates—it is so important for us to be here and to be working together as we move forward. There are so many solutions to implement that, do cross state lines, thank you; and we are very grateful to be invited.

Mr. Irvin:

We found it would be interesting to give a little background of the decades that have transpired since the City became a city. Back under the Dwight Eisenhower era when the highways were being built all across the country, people's access to beautiful places such as Lake Tahoe started to open up more. We started seeing summer cabins being built and people recreating around Lake Tahoe. The Winter Olympics came in the 1960s. As Mayor Bass mentioned earlier, the City incorporated on November 30, 1965. In the 1970s, the City of South Lake Tahoe saw an era of recreation and motels in the Tahoe Keys development. We started seeing motels popping up along U.S. Highway 50, many of which are tired and need a refresh today. Then in the 1980s, the State of California came up with the redevelopment agencies, laws that allowed us to use tax increment financing to invest back in our communities. We saw a lot of that happening. It was quite successful for the City.

One of the items mentioned earlier that is still a goal of ours, that the Mayor will touch on, is the hole in the ground at Stateline that was a failed component of South Lake Tahoe Redevelopment Agency (RDA). We are committed to continuing to try to improve the environmental benefits there. In the '90s, there was great collaboration; the EIP was started and that falls under the TRPA. We participate in that, and we appreciate that program. It brings a lot of money to our trail network systems; our stormwater enhancement projects. We are happy to be a part of that. In the 2000s, we started to see more urbanized development, such as community gathering places like Lakeview Commons and the trail networks that expand all throughout the South Shore. We have some right around here. Just last week, I rode on the [Tahoe East Shore Trail] from Incline to Sand Harbor trail, what an improvement, and an accessibility improvement for those who want to visit this place. Now, we are dealing with affordable housing, economic development, climate change, and transit—while trying to make sure we are an inclusive community for all. I will turn it back over to the Mayor.

Mayor Bass:

You all spoke a little on transit and transportation, which for me, in the five years that I have been serving, have been a top priority. I believe for a lot of the issues, we are dealing with, transit is a major solution; and transportation overall for the region needs to be a focus. In my five years on the TTD Board, I really saw the importance of the TTD, and that it serves the entire region in transportation. I have also seen that it is serving transit for one area of our region, which is the South Shore area. I believe it does not allow the District to equitably serve all of its partners or jurisdictions, which is a total of six of us with the five counties and the City. What I found is, we spend so much of our energy and resources focused on the transit needs of the South Shore, as we should be really focusing on regional efforts to improve the transportation and connect the service providers of the different transit agencies. Recently, the Board of Supervisors, as well as the City Council unanimously approved the Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to take on the transit operations on the South Shore. I believe this is very exciting for the TTD, as it allows the focus to really get more focused on transportation and capital transportation projects that can equitably serve the entire region. That is underway, and we are evaluating moving the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds into the JPA.

One of the things I would also like to address is California does have what is known as the TDA. It is our gas tax that provides \$3.7 million a year for transit operation funds into the Basin. That is split between Placer County and right now the TTD, and we really need to see Nevada have the ongoing dedicated source of transit operation funds that match that of California. The different needs are very different from—especially on the South Shore. Our transit needs in the City are much more of a dense population and serving a seven-mile mainline. The Nevada needs really are linking the Carson Valley with Stateline; and getting the workforce which is 3,000 to 5,000 trips a day coming up and over Spooner and Kingsbury Grade. We have got to figure out how to transition that to transit, with regular headway. With that, we have also got the U.S. Highway 50 project that has taken many iterations through the years. We have invested with Caltrans for a safety project along U.S. 50. There is talk about the U.S. 50 revitalization program. We believe it to be very critical that extends beyond the Stateline, and take care of the entire Corridor of the pedestrian walk area within the Stateline Corridor. We also would like to introduce a citywide gondola that can move pedestrians to the City of South Lake Tahoe. That would eventually in the long term; be able to mobilize the people through new ways of transit. With that, I will turn it to Joe.

Mr. Irvin:

Now with respect to affordable housing and land use. Sugar Pine Village has been mentioned quite a few times earlier. It is a great project and our staff at City Hall deserve great credit for bringing in a lot of money through grants from the State of California Housing Community Development Department. First phase will be occupying 64 units with residents and families this fall. We are securing money for the remaining last two phases. We also are working to build 75 units on a piece of land just outside of the Stateline Casino core. We are working with a private developer, and that is a project that will be coming through our development review process soon.

We have had a great working relationship recently with regards to land use amendments; some of those were mentioned during the TRPA housing presentation. Those are improvements our community greatly wants, in increased density as appropriate, increased height, flexibility to help us incentivize developers to fix those motels I talked about that are so tired and in disrepair—which could be built in a mixed-use manner with commercial and

some modest level of workforce housing. We need to find a way to get creative and allow our developers to build projects that their proforma works and allows us to enhance our natural—our built environment along U.S. Highway 50.

The Midtown area plan: this is an exciting plan for us. There is a lot of public land in the middle of the City, and we are embarking on this Tuesday night at our City Council meeting. We will have a presentation for our 15-month planning schedule for how we are going to engage with our community—various stakeholders—to incentivize yet again, zoning opportunities that incentivize redevelopment in the midtown. I will turn it back to the Mayor.

Mayor Bass:

Within the housing development, we really need to analyze all of the things we can do that will help affordable housing. We are still dealing with issues, whether it is within height and density; the new changes are great, but we can go further. One of the things I really believe strongly is that we need to apply tourist accommodation units to vacation overnight rentals. I think it is imperative that we look at vacation rentals as overnight. I am not saying that we completely get rid of them, but we need to look at what their effect is as an overnight—what their effect is on the region, but as well as on housing. We also need to be collecting fees from them as the TRPA to put back into transit. There is no reason that overnight rentals should not be paying fees to mitigate the impacts they have on transit.

Mr. Irvin:

Now, a couple of exciting projects that are on the horizon for us with regard to recreation and equitable access right on the South Shore. We went through a master planning effort to design a site in a 56-acre park, right on the South Shore in South Lake Tahoe for a multigenerational recreation and aquatic center. With May 1st being a few days ago, the work foundations—it is happening right now, and it is a very exciting project. Over 60,000 square feet of recreation space, swimming pools, running tracks. This is a great investment in the middle of our town. We can actually show those developers we are trying to attract to reinvest in those rundown properties that there is public investment happening in South Lake, and that it is a good place to invest your money. We are doing it, so please come and do it as well.

The other final recreation and equitable access improvement we are working on addressing, has to do with our coordination with the California State Lands Commission to ensure we enforce signage on beaches on Lake Tahoe that do not prohibit or steer people away from not thinking they are allowed to walk on certain portions of the beach that are above the high-water mark. I understand there are different rules in Nevada and California with regards to that, but that is something we are taking seriously. We want to make sure the public is invited to access those beaches in a manner that is safe and not intrusive to the neighbors adjacent to that.

Mayor Bass:

As a high priority for us—and it was spoken about in public comments earlier—is what is known as the hole in the ground, which is a major development that started in the late 2000s; that did not have the proper performance bonds and things regardless to that. We are making that a number one priority for the City, which will help that entire Stateline Corridor.

Moving on, one of the issues that happened—I believe it was in the 2018 year, maybe it was 2019—is we had a major snowstorm over Interstate 80 (I-80). We had a closure during the Christmas holidays that resulted in Reno being closed for four days, and people being stuck in Reno trying to get over the I-80 summit. There was a lack of coordination between the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and Nevada’s Department of Transportation (NDOT). We believe it is imperative that when these incidents happen, that there is a link between Caltrans and NDOT, to make sure Highway 50 is not open when we have had four days of people waiting in Reno. We almost had a very—could have been a really bad situation with all of those people trying to come through South Lake Tahoe that had been stuck in Reno for four days. I think it is something that needs to be brought up, and the coordination between both states—of both states’ DOTs—is imperative.

Mr. Irvin:

Another challenge we are seeing is something we want to make sure we coordinate closely with, is the TRPA mobility mitigation fees and its impact on redevelopment. For instance, if a property sits vacant and is not utilized for 60 months or longer, the presumed use would go away, and new mitigation fees are applied at a very high level which could prohibit developers from coming in to reinvest in that property. It is something we want to try to begin dialogue with TRPA to see how we can fix that or make that more flexible for those new development opportunities.

Other opportunities include a request for Nevada to consider dedicated funding sources for housing to ensure there is a shared approach to building housing. It was mentioned in the last presentation that the Stateline median income is \$30,000 or less. Some of the housing the people who work at the casinos live in—right across state line—are in the City and it is not the best housing; we recognize that. But as we have illustrated through our presentation here and it has been mentioned by other speakers—are investing in housing. We would like to try to make sure there is equity around the Basin from Douglas County, Washoe County, Placer County, El Dorado County to build their fair share of housing, because we do not see a lot more of it happening—while we are doing that. Also, it was mentioned earlier, dedicated funding for transit from Nevada would be a huge ask from us.

Mayor Bass:

Improving Basin-wide transit and traffic throughout the Basin is obviously a major priority for everybody. We play different roles in it. However, when we look at Nevada—when I look now—what can we do in the now? Really working inside the Basin, and making sure that people when they get here can move around. But then we look 25 years down the road, and what are we going to do then to reduce the vehicles?

Rail is what is done all over the world. When we look at alpine environments—whether it is in the Alps or Japan—rail has been the way that we bring people from the flatland into the mountains, and we really need to make that plan. Northern Nevada is a key component of making that work. We have seen high-speed rail maps that will connect San Francisco to Reno, but we have not seen a map showing a line from Reno to Minden—eventually with a line coming back up Spooner the way that it used to. With new technology, we would be able to get many people here in a 25-year time frame by rail from the Bay Area, and also from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport (Reno Airport). But until then, we have to look at the now. One of the biggest things we have seen that has been cut from the casinos is the change there has been with the Reno Airport shuttle. I think something that Nevada's focus should return to is how are we going to get the Reno Airport shuttle to run on an hourly basis? It used to have 12 trips a day, and we are down to 4 trips a day; that is a major

problem for the South Shore. Similar to the way the federal government will subsidize airlines with guaranteed seat revenue, I think Nevada needs to look at subsidizing a guaranteed seat revenue with Amador Stage Lines. So, if they do not sell a certain number of seats, funding would kick in to make sure those routes and the 12 trips a day continue.

We have an amazing airport in the City of South Lake Tahoe, but it happens to be 67 miles from the Reno Airport. If we were 70 miles, we would get that enhanced air service. But because we do not, we really rely on the Reno airport, and we need to make sure we have transit that runs consistently between both. With that, thank you.

Mr. Irvin:

We are open to any questions, and thanks again for the opportunity to present.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. Committee, questions? Senator Scheible.

Senator Scheible:

You did not touch on this in your presentation, and I am not sure if you are the wrong people to ask, but I am fascinated by the latest restrictions on single use plastic in the City of South Lake Tahoe. I was hoping you could tell us a little bit more about what you have done, and how you got there.

Mayor Bass:

Sure. I should have touched on it, because it is a great thing that we have done. It just took effect; the enforcement of the law went into effect on Earth Day. We believe plastic water bottles create a lot of microplastics as well as there are better solutions today. For us, when we went into that, we obviously saw some resistance from our local business owners and people who thought we were taking business away from them, but it was really educating them that there are other solutions such as cans and all sorts of glass, other ways they are able to still sell a product—make the same margin—and it is improving the Lake. I have recently asked that the TRPA take that on at a Basin-wide level, because I think it is something that is about land use. When we look at the microplastics, we are finding them in the water. The TRPA should take the approach, in my opinion, to go ahead and make this a Basin-wide ban.

Senator Scheible:

I am going to ask a little bit more pointed question. Is it an ordinance that was passed?

Mayor Bass:

Yes.

Senator Scheible:

Is that passed by the City Council—I assume?

Mayor Bass:

Yes.

Senator Scheible:

How many votes were needed, and how many votes were there to implement the ban?

Mayor Bass:

To call the exact vote back—I believe it was unanimous, but I do not want to be quoted; I believe it was, I think it was a unanimous vote. But it would take 3 to 2; we are a five-person Council. We have the powers within the City to pass ordinances that govern what is sold in our City.

Senator Scheible:

Alright, thank you.

Mr. Irvin:

If I may add one clarifying component there. We recognize that while we wanted to reduce the amount of plastic bottles on the shelves in stores below that one gallon size, that we needed to also invest in a water filling infrastructure. Therefore, we have added four filling stations at high visitation parks and facilities; and there are campaigns going on by a lot of entities on South Shore to get people bottles.

Senator Scheible:

Can you explain a little bit better how the ordinance works? If I am walking down the street with a plastic water bottle, I assume police officers are not going to stop me and confiscate it. Or maybe they are, I do not know.

Mayor Bass:

No, it is not a ban on you possessing a plastic bottle of water. It is a ban on any merchant selling a plastic water bottle. You being in possession of one would not be in any violation of the ordinance.

Senator Scheible:

Can they give them away?

Mr. Irvin:

We have had people ask that question, probably in spite of the ordinance. We will discourage that, but I do not think it is addressed in the ordinance.

Senator Scheible:

Okay.

Chair Daly:

I think economics will take over at some point; they would quit giving them away because they cost money. They are not going to give empty ones. Vice Chair, do you have any questions?

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Yes. I apologize because I am on Zoom, but it sounded like they said something about gondolas downtown. Did I hear that right? It was when we were talking about transportation.

Mayor Bass:

Yes, our Council put it in our strategic plan to explore the idea of a gondola that would stretch from Stateline to the South Y Shopping Center (the Y); it would have five stops and it would stop in both directions. Urban gondolas are starting to be used pretty commonly throughout all the world right now—quite a few projects here in the United States—and because we are a ski town, people are already used to being able to get on a gondola. They can design these now that you can put your bike on. If we were able to do that between Stateline and the Y, we would never have to run a bus. If you want to look at the carbon calculations of never having to run a bus on Highway 50 and the amount of people you would move; it really starts to make sense. The cool thing for us is Highway 50 is Caltrans, so that type of a project is something that we would lean on Caltrans to financially make feasible.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Interesting. How many people would this be able to move? I am trying to understand the scope.

Mayor Bass:

I do not know how often you have been to a ski resort, but gondolas work in detachable systems, so the car comes off of the line; and you essentially are able to move thousands of people an hour, the way these systems work. If you are able to make stations where it stops going in both directions, you can move thousands and thousands of people. It is pretty remarkable. One system that is very cool to look at is in Mexico City. They just had Doppelmayr build a very cool, urban gondola that is exactly seven miles, which would be the same distance for the proposal in South Lake Tahoe.

Vice Chair Bilbray-Axelrod:

Thank you, I will look into that. I appreciate it.

Chair Daly:

I have a couple of questions. I was writing some notes down, and you have initials here and I was not exactly sure what they were. You said one of them—you have FTA and TDA and you said something—Transportation Authority or something. Can you tell me what those are? Then I have a different question after that.

Mayor Bass:

Yes, absolutely. The FTA funds are coming out of the Federal Transit Administration. Those are our federal funds that are allocated to the region that include Nevada as part of those funds. The TDA funds are from the TDA from the State of California. We have a gas tax that is ongoing funds that actually cannot even be amended out of our budget, so they are guaranteed transit operations funds that have to be used for direct transit

operations. That is what I was saying when we have these regional bi-state issues, the funding sources are obviously a lot different.

Chair Daly:

Understood. I know I have been thinking about, and we are going to try to look at something for funding for the TTD. I am hoping you guys are working on that, obviously, that is a TRPA agency, so it covers both sides. But, I understand your equity issue as well; and is it fair and where are the funds coming from. But you mentioned you recently entered into a joint powers agreement—between who and who? What joint powers? Is that the county and the city, or is it all in California?

Mr. Irvin:

The City Council recently approved a resolution by a vote of 5 to 0 to initiate the JPA formation discussions with El Dorado County. El Dorado County Board of Supervisors also voted unanimously to enter into those same discussions with us. So, for the next eight months, we will be working with them and legal expertise to form the JPA, and make sure we coordinate with all of the regional partners we work with up here in the Basin as well.

Chair Daly:

The Joint Powers Agreement—you are going to have a specific thing, for instance, in Northern Nevada, in Reno, at the Truckee Meadows Water Authority and there is a joint Powers Agreement, and they do the water. You have City of Reno, you have City of Sparks, you have Washoe County. Same thing with the RTC of Washoe County is a joint powers agreement between the same three entities to do that. Is it specific to transportation, housing, water, or sewer? I am just curious.

Mr. Irvin:

It is specific to transportation.

Chair Daly:

Transportation—that makes sense with the whole deal, because when you said the joint powers, I did not know who it was between, and what it was focused on. Because if you have been listening—at least today or any of our other hearings—we have significant issues reoccurring on jurisdiction inequities, jurisdiction inconsistencies, and then jurisdictions not cooperating; although there is a whole bunch of people trying to get everyone on the same page. Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not.

My next question, the housing you guys are doing—I think it was Sugar Pine—is that single family housing, condominiums, or multifamily housing?

Mayor Bass:

It has single person units—it has one, two, and three bedroom units. It is a multitude of different units available. And it is comprised—

Chair Daly:

Apartments?

Mayor Bass:

Yes, they are apartments.

Chair Daly:

I know you mentioned a little bit on the infill. You guys are trying to—and I think it is the way to go—you already have your City limits. It has already been developed. Some of it you said was significantly old and not being used, so you are looking to do the infill. Do you have a redevelopment agency in South Lake Tahoe?

Mayor Bass:

Redevelopment was ended in 2010 by the Governor; therefore, we do not any longer have a redevelopment agency under the City. But we have worked with like, Saint Joseph's Land Trust who was here earlier today. We will work with developers in the affordable housing development to bring them forward.

Chair Daly:

I am familiar with redevelopment agencies, at least on the Nevada side, and how they work, and the tax increments. I think they work the same whether you are in California or Nevada. I am familiar with that, but you guys do not have the redevelopment agencies any longer.

Mayor Bass:

They were ended in 2010. They exist in California, but it is a new thing, and there are actually none that have been formed. It does exist in the state law. It was part of [Governor] Jerry Brown's reorganization of California back in 2010.

Chair Daly:

Well, they can work, but they can also have drawbacks and pitfalls; and then sometimes they get directed the wrong direction. So, a different question, my understanding in Nevada from what we were talking about on vacation rental homes—those are taxed in Nevada at least the same as like a room tax as if it was at a hotel. It is not taxed like that in California.

Mayor Bass:

We still do have a few VHRs within the City limits, but they were banned by the voters back in 2018; however they are allowed in our tourist core and commercial. Yes, we do collect the TOT in the City, and I believe most all jurisdictions do. What I am speaking to is an impact fee to be on an annual basis. Because if we have 5,000 or 6,000 VHRs around the Basin currently, and we even collected \$1,000 a year for a transit impact fee, that is \$6 million of local money that could be going into transit operations. I think those impacts are very real. I also think it opens up the conversations around how many VHRs do we actually need and want to have in the Basin for our overnight capacity?

Chair Daly:

I recently heard something on the news—or in Nevada on an initiative or something—to put a fee like that. I do not know how high it would be. But then I think you guys probably saw the Supreme Court ruling in—it might have been Oregon—where they were trying to charge

a person \$23,000 to put in a power line or something. The Supreme Court said, "No, you cannot charge excessive fees like that." So even if you are successful on your vote, it may or may not be upheld. But to me—and I am glad to have your perspective; we asked the county similar questions, and we asked, "Tell us what we do not know; tell us how things are from your point of view on the ground; what you are trying to implement; and how all of this works together." Because on some of the stuff and the solutions we are looking for—and we hope to meet with the California counterparts at some point; they do not have a committee like this. Because it seems to me, some of that type of legislation would have to go to both states. If one state went first in different sessions, you would have to make it contingent upon similar law being passed in the other state—whichever direction it went—for those types of things, to fund transportation, et cetera. Some of the other things you asked for are good ideas. I do not know how successful we will be with getting things passed in the Nevada Legislature on some of the issues. It does not mean we will not try it, and it does not mean they are bad ideas.

I think maybe we are talking about the same thing where you said the TRPA mobility mitigation fee. Can you explain that a little bit more?

Mr. Irvin:

That is a transportation impact fee essentially. It is applied to new projects that are proposed to be built, and it is a mitigation fee that is applied to the building permit.

Chair Daly:

It is the same thing I am familiar with on any development I have been involved with when you are going to say you are going to support it or not, is that development needs to mitigate its impacts, whether it is traffic, or the various issues—water. They have to do that simultaneously—concurrently with their development opening. So that is what that is; I am familiar with that, but I think I had not seen it worded like that.

Mr. Irvin:

I do not know that our issue is so much with the new projects and new constructions on the fee as much as it is on projects where we have had vacant buildings for 60 months or more and that fee is kicked in. There is a Chevy's restaurant for instance, and we had somebody from Incline Village who wanted to move in there. That mitigation fee kicked in because it had been vacant 60 months, and that business decided not to move in and now we still have a vacant building. I think it is more about the 60-month time frame, because it is hindering us in being able to see businesses move in and take over what would be abandoned—and still now remain abandoned—buildings due to that 60-month shot clock.

Chair Daly:

That is a TRPA issue—concern; it is a rule they have. It is like the auxiliary housing thing we talked about earlier, where they had a rule and they said, "Hey, this rule is hurting us, so we want to change it." To use your example on the Chevy's restaurant, the restaurant was there—so, when it was built, it mitigated its impact. Having another business open there, all of that impact—in transportation and cars coming in, people going there—has already been mitigated. This extra fee, if it is after 60 months, is another barrier to infill redevelopment. Rather than saying, "Oh, you can just pay it and build a new one," or "We are just not going to come." I think I understand that; that might be something we would talk to the TRPA about. She is making a note over here. Any other questions from the Committee? Seeing

none, that is all I had. I hope it was not too painful for you, but I appreciate you guys coming. That was Item VIII, we will close that.

AGENDA ITEM IX—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Daly:

We will move to Item IX, which is our second period of public comment. Please remember to state your name; turn the microphone on; you have two minutes. We will take all of the people that are here and then we will go to the phones. Please proceed when you are ready.

Doug Flaherty, Tahoe Clean Air.org:

Honorable Chair Daly, Members of the Committee, the other day, I went down to what was once a very pristine, little beach called Hidden Beach—two miles down the road here. Recent information indicates that the East Shore—which is new information—the East Shore has allowed from 1,000 to 3,000 visitors a day that have direct access to this little 75-yard pristine beach. I went down there, and I was stunned; I was heartbroken having recreated in Tahoe for quite some time. Visible multi-layer colors of degraded plastic all up and down the beach, on the beach, in the water, filaments of plastic. I do not—I would have to say thousands that are connected with these other pieces of plastic, degrading plastic bags causing this gooey mess. So, they have been there degrading for quite some time. These gluey, gooey black masses are all up and down Hidden Beach. I would like to ask—you are going to hear more from me on this. I am going to put—give you some photos and some graffiti on the signs, but we need to start protecting Nevada's East Shore. So, the saying I have is "Keep the East Shore True." And I would like to ask you guys to consider after investigating this a little bit, a moratorium on Hidden Beach for the summer, it needs to be restored. It is 75 yards. It was not impacted previously. Now, we have got 1,000 to 3,000 people a day. The dogs—. No restroom—there is a restroom not far from there, but I would like you to take a look at that. And, also try to move that next segment of the East Shore Trail from Sand Harbor to the Thunderbird to the other side of the highway. Thank you.

Pamela Tsigidinos, Nevada Tahoe Resident:

Hi, I would like to thank you for all your time today, and I appreciate your willingness to sit and listen to a lot of very complex issues. I think we all realize that these are not simple problems. We really truly do want to be a part of the solution. One of the things that I think is absolutely essential though is we must consider again the carrying capacity of the Tahoe Basin. I do not know how many of you have driven down East Shore—the East Corridor here on Highway 28. There is a photograph; I am happy to send it to you—I have got multiple versions—of tourists parking on both sides of the road, literally carrying their coolers across to get to access areas that are not designated beaches, but they are creating their own trails. So, this kind of circles back to the bigger transportation thing. Please, if you are looking at transportation, have people who do not live in the Basin take the Basin buses up from Reno, from Carson. If we allow everyone to just randomly create a parking space, I do not know how you ever would evacuate any of these people, us included. So, I really think this notion of a reservation system goes far beyond Sand Harbor. We really need to think how many people can the Basin adequately hold safely. And I think that is a really important question for this Committee and for the TRPA. Would really encourage you to look at both the environmental impacts and the public safety impacts. Thank you.

Alex E. Dennison, Resident, Incline Village:

In this and previous sessions, you have heard public comment—commenters voice concern and skepticism about TRPA’s loss of focus on the environment—mission creed, as well as the issue of sort of the same people cycling through the boards of the organizations that have influence on policy in the Basin. I think we have seen some of that in today's presentation, and that leaves us with a question who is really driving policy in Tahoe. The TRPA’s Destination Stewardship Council slide, for example, if you look at the bottom of it, nearly half of the organizations are commercial interests. There is even some sleight of hand here; for example, the North Tahoe Community Alliance is a rebrand of the North Tahoe Resort Association. When we talk about advertising to the right kinds of tourists and that was brought up. I see also on that slide that we have the Alterra and Vail resorts. Those are multinational corporations which market their resorts, and their Ikon and Epic ski passes globally. So, I do not know how they are managing that. The Tahoe Prosperity Center was founded by commercial interests, has a major influence on Tahoe policy. They are not under your jurisdiction. We do not vote for their Board or for their policy proposals, yet they receive public funding. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency—I was very disappointed seeing the TRPA housing presentation, no mention of short-term rentals (STRs), or the lack of a Basin-wide cap on them. There are 5,000 to 6,000 STRs in the Basin. In the experience in South Lake Tahoe where they put a ban on them outside of commercial areas, 10 to 15 percent—or 15 to 20 percent of those STRs return to long-term rental units, that would get us 900 to 1,100 units of extra housing in the Tahoe Basin without building anything new, or subsidizing any new housing, or changing ordinances to permit high rises in our town centers. Thank you.

Elisabeth Lernhardt, Resident, Zephyr Cove:

I first wanted to counter one of the statements of Mr. Irvin; unfortunately, he left. During the Caldor Fire—yes, they got maybe their population out of South Lake Tahoe across the state line; but it created a major problem for Nevada, and it took more than eight hours to clear the Basin. Now, I want to present some other thoughts. Seemingly every year there is another agency popping up with a new catch phrase to address Tahoe's problem. Last counting, there were 31. They all ask for public funding and have largely overlapping missions. Their members are also overlapping, with further contributions to intellectual and financial inbreeding. Despite all this money and attentions to these issues, not very many concrete results are realized over the last 20 years. It is time to stop the current modus operandi, reduce the ballooning agency creation by defunding them, prohibit multiple memberships on their boards, and hopefully something will happen that changes this. Rein in the government grift and non-elected officials that want more and more money. They want to tax us without representation—without election as mandated in the Compact. I do not think we need more money at it; we need more smart people. Thank you.

Kathie Julian, Resident, Incline Village:

I just want to clarify on a couple points made today by representatives here from TRPA and others. Firstly, the statement that height density and coverage increases only apply to deed restricted properties is not entirely true; because developers who are developing luxury condos, but who include a certain percentage of affordable—let us say, and it has been proposed at 10 percent—can avail of those increased height density and coverage. So, I think we cannot be overly simplistic when we are looking at that. And that is our concern, that you are over-incentivizing unnecessarily. Unlike the Sugar Pine project, which I think was done in a proper way to get, as I understand it, rental housing. Second point is what is missing from the discussion today was in terms of housing—the need for rental housing. Not

even fireman or teacher can afford or want the risk of buying a property in this space, and especially when their jobs may change, or they may be transferred. There is an absence of a discussion of professionally managed rental property in all of the zoning proposals. And third, the issue of ADUs—very complex. So, I think this is something—we have no real evidence that these ADUs will be used for workforce housing. This needs to be explored further, to see if it is a solution. Thank you.

Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance:

I still cannot believe that you are going to have this year's session, and not have a dedicated session to evacuation and forest fires. We are not looking to speak ourselves. Would not you like to hear from the fire chiefs? I guarantee you I will have no trouble getting the Tahoe Douglas Fire Chief, the South Lake Tahoe Fire Chief here to talk to you. It would be a shame that you do not hear about it, given the risks. Environmental—TRPA is currently being sued by one of the best environmental law firms in the country, Shute, Mihaly. Clem Shute was a former chairman of the TRPA, and he is suing them. Would not you like to hear from Shute, Mihaly about why TRPA is in violation of the law environmentally? It has not updated its environmental documents in ten years. Vehicle Miles Traveled—TRPA—you are not going to hear about it if you just listen to the TRPA—they are in gross violation of VMTs. The California Attorney General, I am sure I could get them here to speak to you about how they are in violation. I think you need to see things from the other side. We are not looking to do the presentations ourselves, if you are worried about the riffraff. We will get you quality people here to talk to you. Thank you.
(Agenda Item IX A)

Denise Davis, Resident:

Earlier, you asked about the dissatisfaction of residents. So let me share one example. Twenty years ago tomorrow, I closed on my home, located across the highway from the Ponderosa, an attraction that operated in the summer season with specific hours. Now, I live across the highway from the parking lots for the East Shore Trail, which is open 365 days a year from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. But there are no gates to prevent parking outside those hours. So parking and car alarms occur whenever. But in project speak, it was a parking lot before and it is a parking lot now—so, no difference, right? Concerns about an inadequate amount of parking for the Trail were voiced often during planning. Now, the neighborhood deals with parked cars and pedestrians who cannot find a place in the lots or refuse to pay for parking. Our requests for solutions are brushed aside, because a better public good has been served. We are routinely dismissed and then left to live with the consequences. We are alarmed when these same leaders ask for funding to replicate these super successful projects around the Lake without addressing existing and potential problems. But hey, since bike rentals and restaurant visits create economic benefit, it is all good, right? Thank you.

Chair Daly:

Seeing no further comment here, do we have anybody on the phone?

BPS:

To provide public comment, please press *9 now or raise hand in your Zoom window to take your place in the queue. Chair, there are no callers wishing to provide comment at this time.

Additional written public comment was submitted (Agenda Item IX B):

- Robert Aaron, Private Citizen.
- Wendy Jepson, Department Manager, Permitting and Compliance Manager, TRPA.
- Darcie Colins, Chief Executive Officer, and Gavin Feiger, Policy Director, League to Save Lake Tahoe.
- Linda Offerdahl, Executive Director, Incline Village, Crystal Bay Community and Business Association.

Chair Daly:

Thank you. With that, we will close our second period of public comment.

Which brings us to Item X. As we conclude our meeting today, thanks to all the presenters, members of the public, members of the Committee. Before we adjourn, I would like to remind everyone that our next meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2024, and we will likely be heading back to the TRPA offices in Stateline for that meeting. But please check the Committee's website to confirm our next meeting location. Seeing no further business before us, the meeting is adjourned. Thank you.

AGENDA ITEM X—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christina Harper
Manager of Research Policy Assistants

Alysa M. Keller
Senior Principal Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Senator Skip Daly, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item II A	Doug Flaherty, Tahoe Clean Air.org	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II B	Pamela Tsigdinos, Nevada Lake Tahoe Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II C	Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II D-1	Elisabeth Lernhardt, Zephyr Cove Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II D-2	Elisabeth Lernhardt, Zephyr Cove Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II E	Ronda Tycker, Incline Village Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II F-1	Ellie Waller, Nevada Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item II F-2	Ellie Waller, Nevada Resident	Written Public Comment
Agenda Item IV	Devin Middlebrook, Government Affairs Manager, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Nettie Pardue, Managing Director, Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Council	PowerPoint Presentation Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada.
Agenda Item V	Bob Mergell, Administrator, Division of State Parks, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VI	Julie Regan, Executive Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) Karen Fink, Principal Planner, TRPA	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII	Bill Chan, Program Manager, Tahoe Prosperity Center	PowerPoint Presentation Due to copyright issues, the handout is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada.
Agenda Item VIII	Cody Bass, Mayor, City of South Lake Tahoe, California Joseph Irvin, City Manager, City of South Lake Tahoe, California	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item IX A	Brett Tibbitts, Tahoe East Shore Alliance	Written Public Comment

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item IX B		<p>Compilation of written comments received from members of the public who did not speak during the meeting. These comments are posted individually on the Legislature's website for this meeting and can be found at the address below:</p> <p>https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Interim2023/Meeting/34498</p>

The Minutes are supplied as an informational service. All meeting materials are on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/Library/About/Contact/feedbackmail.cfm>.