



March 3, 2015

Dear El Dorado County Supervisors,

**Tahoe Prosperity Center and El Dorado County Partnership History:**

One of the top five overarching goals for El Dorado County is: Encourage Economic Development: Prioritize, focus and collaborate. The Tahoe Prosperity Center is the County's partner in ensuring this goal is realized for the Tahoe Basin portion of El Dorado County.

The County previously provided \$20,000 in funding to the Western Nevada Development District for development of the 2010 Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan and for "bridge funding" the support the establishment of the TPC.

The result of this funding from El Dorado County, along with the other Tahoe Basin government jurisdictions (Carson City, Douglas County, Placer County, Washoe County and the City of South Lake Tahoe) resulted in the first and only Basin-wide economic strategy – the [2010 Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan \(Plan\)](#). This was an unprecedented collaborative effort and is currently the only record of Tahoe socio-economics in existence for the area.

This Plan identified three primary economic clusters for the Tahoe Basin: Tourism/Visitor Services, Environmental Innovation and Health and Wellness. It contains over 100 recommended initiatives to improve the regional economy. Without the funding provided by El Dorado County, the Prosperity Plan would not exist today.

The Tahoe Prosperity Center (TPC) was created as a signature recommendation of the Plan. El Dorado County was on the Steering Committee for the Plan and continued this engagement with Norma Santiago as a member of the TPC board of directors. We will bring an official request to the Board to determine who best from the County could fill that position moving forward, since as a Basin-wide organization, we want to continue to have strong representation from El Dorado County.

**Status of current partnership:**

Each of the government jurisdictions representing the Lake Tahoe Basin supported the development of the Prosperity Plan and the creation of the Tahoe Prosperity Center and continues to fund TPC's efforts of economic development in the region.

The Prosperity Plan indicators have not been updated since 2010. With funding from El Dorado County, the TPC plans to complete an updated Plan this summer, along with additional social and economic indicators for the region in our Measuring for Prosperity Report. This data will provide critical information to the County's Economic Development department such as: jobs by industry, free and reduced school meal rates, annual per-capita income and development in urban areas.

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This data will help El Dorado County reach some of its other stated goals including:

- Collect and provide economic and demographic data
- Instituting a “Business and Economic Development Scorecard”
- Rebrand and market El Dorado County business and economic development
- Identify, align and support local and regional business and economic development efforts
- Identify and survey the entrepreneurial business community to determine needs
- Work with existing incubators, business and research parks, higher education, and workforce development officials to connect entrepreneurs to existing financial tools, resources and facilities.

TPC will help the County reach these goals not only through the Measuring for Prosperity Report, but also through our Connected Tahoe project. We are working to help enable high-speed internet access in the Tahoe Basin. Based on the results of our data gathering this summer, we have identified a number of “unserved” communities for high-speed internet service. In El Dorado County, these areas include the El Dorado County Library in the City of South Lake Tahoe, Meeks Bay, Rubicon and some areas in Meyers.

Continued support for these efforts by the County should increase access to high-speed internet service, which is a necessity today for students to do homework, for businesses to thrive and grow, and especially for the County Library – a valuable resource in our community.

**Our continued partnership:**

The other government jurisdictions in the Tahoe Basin have yearly funding agreements to support economic development efforts in the Tahoe Basin and we hope El Dorado County will also consider a yearly agreement of \$10,000 to the Tahoe Prosperity Center. This funding is in line with other jurisdictions and will continue to be focused on economic development work specific to the Tahoe Basin while benefitting the entire Region. The Tahoe Prosperity Center understands that this is not a guaranteed source of income and we will continue to provide project details and updates to the Board of Supervisors on how our economic development efforts are enhancing the County’s goals.

As one of the initial partners in our efforts to support economic prosperity in the Lake Tahoe Basin, we look forward to continuing our partnership moving forward. We will continue to work with the County to ensure that our efforts align with the goals of the County regarding economic development and provide a return on your investment

Sincerely,

Sandy Evans Hall, Board Chair and Heidi Hill Drum, Executive Director

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Summary of Tahoe Prosperity Center Accomplishments since its inception in 2011.

- Successfully completed 501(c)(3) designation as non-profit organization, including developing by-laws and development of an all-volunteer board of directors to govern the Tahoe Prosperity Center (TPC).
- Formed the TPC Board of Directors representing Tahoe Basin government jurisdictions as well as non-profit organizations, private businesses, science, education institutions and the community, consistent with the goals from the Lake Tahoe Basin Prosperity Plan.
- Acquired a multi-year grant from the CA Public Utilities Commission for the Connected Tahoe Project – focused on expanding high speed internet access and cell phone coverage in the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- Facilitated a pilot project between major cell phone providers, cell tower builders, the US Forest Service and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency to identify the most appropriate locations for new cell towers within the Tahoe Basin that will maximize coverage with minimal environmental impact. This process is now being considered for other national forests across the country.
- Completed mapping of broadband service in the project area, including eligibility for state and federal subsidies and an evaluation of the population density and revenue potential of under and unserved areas.
- Identified potential middle mile solutions for prospective last mile service and infrastructure upgrades for broadband service.
- Completed Round 1 speed test and survey outreach, which resulted in 1,100 speed tests and over 600 surveys
- Led multi-jurisdictional and community stakeholder meetings to develop consensus-based proposals for changes to the current commodities system in the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- Completed the Lake Tahoe Regional Land Development Action Plan outlining the consensus-based proposals from the stakeholder meetings resulting in a number of current policy changes being made by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.
- Hosted a series of community Economic Forums with the Tahoe Chamber to continue to engage the public around the Tahoe Basin economy.
- Created a website and social media Facebook page with information about the Prosperity Plan and the TPC projects.
- Hired a part-time Executive Director
- Hired a full-time Project Manager for the Connected Tahoe Project

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## TAHOE PROSPERITY CENTER

### Board of Directors 2015

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Claudia Andersen  | Parasol Tahoe Community Foundation, CEO                      |
| Carol Chaplin     | Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, Executive Director            |
| Hal Cole          | City of South Lake Tahoe, Mayor                              |
| Kindle Craig      | Barton Foundation, Executive Director                        |
| Sandy Evans Hall  | North Lake Tahoe Resort Association/CVB/Chamber, CEO         |
| Lew Feldman       | Feldman, McLaughlin and Thiel, LLP, Partner                  |
| B Gorman          | Tahoe Chamber, President/CEO                                 |
| Lisa Granahan     | Douglas County, Economic Vitality Manager                    |
| Carl Hasty        | Tahoe Transportation District, Director                      |
| Brian Hogan       | US Bank, Regional Vice-President                             |
| Ivone Larson      | Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Assistant Superintendent |
| Rick Lind         | Sierra Ecosystems Associates, Owner                          |
| Joanne Marchetta  | Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Executive Director           |
| Maureen McCarthy  | Tahoe Science Consortium, Director                           |
| John McLaughlin   | Edgewood Companies, CFO                                      |
| Bob Mecay         | South Shore Companies, Owner                                 |
| Jennifer Merchant | Placer County Executive Office, Assistant CEO                |
| <i>Proposed</i>   | <i>El Dorado County</i>                                      |
| Lee Plemel        | Carson City Planning Division/Redevelopment, Director        |
| Deborah Prout     | Sierra Nevada College, Special Assistant to the President    |
| Ken Riley         | Kiewit Infrastructure Group, Senior Vice-President           |
| Michelle Risdon   | Lake Tahoe Community College, Interim Dean, Academic Affairs |
| Robert Stern      | Investor   |
| Cheryl Surface    | Washoe County, Tahoe Team Leader/Planner                     |
| Jesse Walker      | New Economics & Advisory/Tahoe Mountain Lab, Owner, partner  |
| Barbara Winn      | AT&T, Area Director  |

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## The Tahoe Basin Project Summary Report

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**Counties:** Portions of El Dorado and Placer

**Point of Contact:** Bev Ducey; (W) 775.298.0267; (C) 530.412.1452; email: bev@tahoeprosperty.org

**Website:** [tahoeprosperty.org/speed](http://tahoeprosperty.org/speed)

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### Key outcomes of consortium achievements since May 16, 2014:

#### *Action Plan Goals:*

1. Collect and map current broadband infrastructure and related data within the Tahoe Basin, Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley, using data already available from the CPUC, Connect Nevada and other agencies.
2. Conduct a community-wide broadband needs assessment and speed test and overlay this data with the data collected above.
3. Analyze the data above to determine the unserved and underserved areas within the Tahoe Basin, Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley.
4. Assist interested Internet Service Providers (ISP) in writing a minimum of three infrastructure grants to the CPUC for broadband expansion in the identified unserved and underserved communities.
5. Facilitation of Cell Service Expansion

#### *Accomplishments:*

##### **High Speed Internet Expansion**

1. Completed mapping of broadband service in the project area, including eligibility for state and federal subsidies and an evaluation of the population density and revenue potential of under and unserved areas.
2. Held in person and phone meetings with incumbent and potential competitive Internet service providers to discuss possible projects eligible for California Advanced Services Fund grants and loans. Conversations are on-going.
3. Met with residents to discuss broadband needs and gaps.
4. Met with federal, state, county and regional planning, transportation, public works, utilities and emergency services personnel to identify resources, needs and opportunities for partnership.
5. Identified potential middle mile solutions for prospective last mile service and infrastructure upgrades.
6. Began the process of evaluating and prioritizing potential partners and projects.
7. Complete Round 1 speed test and survey outreach, which resulted in 1,100 speed tests and over 600 surveys
8. All relevant data above was given to the CPUC for posting on the state's interactive map and added to our maps.
9. Community outreach continues through presentations to service and business groups, elected officials and one-on-one meetings with concerned/interested businesses and residents.
10. Documentation continues on underserved and unserved areas not represented on the map.
11. Expect to submit one to two CASF infrastructure grants this year.

##### **Cell Service Expansion**

1. Held meeting with TRPA, USFS and cell/tower providers to discuss the cell/tower companies' interest in participating in a feasibility analysis of each company's five year plan. The goal of the feasibility analysis is to identify the areas of common interest in expanding cell coverage and thereby determining the best co-location spots for those areas with the greatest mutual interest. All companies expressed interest in participating.
2. Completed meeting with each company individually to define the data needed to be able to do the analysis. Companies have until March 27 to submit their plans for analysis.

## Best Practices Achieved:

### Leadership

Because the Tahoe Basin has extreme political, geographical, environmental and regulatory challenges, having a leadership team comprised of all these entities plus business, education and health is critical. The Tahoe Prosperity Center has representation from all these entities plus has relationships with key partners not represented on the board.

### Leveraging CPUC Consortium Successes to Date

In addition to reaching out to incumbent providers, we are starting discussions with independent middle and last mile providers as an alternative solution to bringing service to underserved communities. Based on the work of all the earlier Consortiums, we can prioritize our outreach based on their successful relationships and outcomes. It has also been very helpful to learn what hasn't worked well from the other Consortium members.

### Ground Truthing

We've developed a solution whereby our speed test data and targeted surveys are all captured within our own database at a very low cost, through the use of an API by Speed of Me. This site continues to be active and will be used in targeted outreach, as needed, during our application preparation phase. See [www.tahoeprosperty.org/speed](http://www.tahoeprosperty.org/speed).

### Cell Expansion Project

The goals of the cell expansion project are:

- a. Accelerate attainment of comprehensive cell coverage for the Lake Tahoe Basin
- b. Minimize impact on the environment
- c. Create a predictable and efficient process for cell coverage expansion
- d. Enhance public safety and environmental monitoring

We are achieving these goals through a partnership with the US Forest Service, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the cell provider and tower companies. In summary, the Tahoe Prosperity Center is receiving all the 3 to 5 year expansion plans of the cell/tower companies and anonymously mapping those locations for a feasibility analysis by the USFS and TRPA with the ultimate goal of finding co-location center sites that will meet the needs of the majority of the requests. This is being watched by other units within the USFS as a possible model to replicate.

## Challenges Faced:

**Fragmented governance structure** – Tahoe encompasses two states, portions of 5 counties and one incorporated city.

**Unique environment** – steep mountainous topography, extensive conifer forests, a large expanse of water within a very small montane watershed, extreme winter weather.

**Regulatory hurdles** – There are strict regulatory safeguards imposed by the US Forest Service, which manages 78% of the Basin land, and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) responsible for protecting the environment through regulating development.

**Short Building Season** – The building season in Tahoe runs from May 15 through October 15. No ground work can be done before or after that window.

## Outstanding Gaps/Needs:

1. Independent middle mile fiber
2. Willing last mile partners
3. Projects where, even with grant funding, the ROI encourages investment