



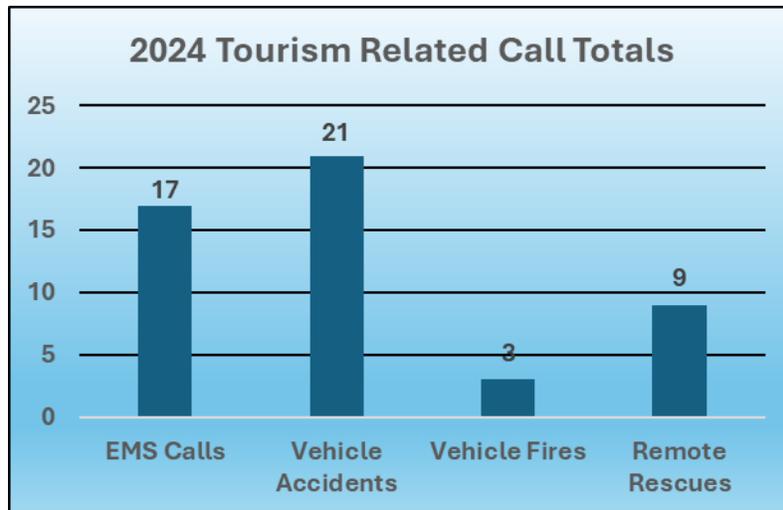
*"We are dedicated to provide professional and courteous service to our citizens and communities with Pride, Trust & Integrity."*

March 14, 2025

Sue Hennike, Assistant CAO  
El Dorado County  
300 Fair Ln, Placerville 95667

Ms. Hennike,  
On behalf of El Dorado County Fire District, I would like to thank you and the Board of Supervisors for again considering the use of DTOT funding to reimburse emergency responses for Tourism Related Calls within the County. Our County offers a variety of activities and resources that attract a significant amount of tourism, which unfortunately creates situations which require emergency responses.

Our methodology for tourism-related calls and costs are the same as the previous years. We established a base time commitment and resource allocation per response type, while using our 2024 OES salary rates for consistency. This past year we experienced a decrease in all call types in comparison to previous years, most notably a decrease in EMS calls.



The following charts illustrate the costs associated with these responses:

2024 ECF Base OES Salary Rates:	
Chief Officer	\$54.75
Captain	\$42.77
Engineer	\$37.97
Firefighter	\$35.49

EMS Calls: 17 - Single Engine 2 HR		
	Per Hr	Total
Captain	\$42.77	\$1,454.18
Engineer	\$37.97	\$1,290.98
Firefighter	\$35.49	\$1,206.66
Fire Engine (1)	\$173.47	\$5,897.98
Total Costs for 17 calls		\$9,849.80

EMS Calls: 17 Total Cost:	\$9,849.80
Vehicle Accidents: 21 Total Cost:	\$29,984.33
Vehicle Fires: 3 Total Cost:	\$4,283.48
Remote Area Rescues: 9 Total Cost:	\$33,745.77
OES Admin Rate: 18.3%	\$14,249.00
Total Costs:	\$92,112.37

Vehicle Fires: 3 - Two Engines, Chief, 2.5 HRs		
	Per Hr	Total
Captain (2)	\$42.77	\$641.55
Engineer (2)	\$37.97	\$569.55
Firefighter (2)	\$35.49	\$532.35
Chief (1)	\$54.75	\$410.63
Fire Engine (2)	\$141.96	\$2,129.40
Total Costs for 3 Calls:		\$4,283.48

Remote Area Rescues: 9 - Three Engines, Chief, 4 HRs		
	Per Hr	Total
Captain (3)	\$42.77	\$8,083.53
Engineer (3)	\$37.97	\$4,100.76
Firefighter (3)	\$35.49	\$4,258.80
Chief (1)	\$54.75	\$1,971.00
Fire Engine (3)	\$141.96	\$15,331.68
Total Costs for 9 Calls:		\$33,745.77

Our reimbursement request for tourism related calls during 2024 is **\$92,112.37**.

Thank you in advance for the consideration and continued support for the fire service within our County.

Respectfully,



Tim Cordero, Fire Chief  
El Dorado County Fire Protection District

# GEORGETOWN FIRE

## TOT GRANT FOR CALENDAR 2024

**Tourism Related Responses**

12 EMS incidents (5 in a type 1 engine and 4 in a type 3 engine)  
 8 Motor Vehicle Accidents (3 in a type 1 engine and 4 in a type 3 engine and 1 in both and Chief Officers)  
 2 Remote Area Rescues (type 3 engines and Chief Officer)

**VEHICLES**

EMS

1 x 2 hours in type 1 engine = 2 hours x \$173.47/hr =	\$ 346.94
<u>11 x 2 hours in type 3 engine = 22 hours x \$156.74/hr =</u>	<u>\$ 3,448.28</u>
Subtotal	\$ 3,795.22

Motor Vehicle Accident

3 x 2.5 hours in type 1 engine = 7.5 hours x \$173.47/hr =	\$ 1,301.03
4 x 2.5 hours in type 3 engine = 10 hours x \$156.74/hr =	\$ 1,567.40
1 x 2.5 hours (both type 1 and type 3) = 2.5 hours x 173.47	\$ 433.68
= 2.5 hours x \$156.74	\$ 391.85
8 x 2.5 hours for Chief Vehicle = 20 hours x \$11.86/hr =	\$ 237.20
<u>1 x 2.5 hours for second Chief on an MVA = 2.5 x \$11.86</u>	<u>\$ 29.65</u>
Subtotal	\$ 3,960.81

Remote Area Rescue

2 x 4 hours x 1 type 3 engine = 8 hours x \$156.74/hr =	\$ 1,253.92
Second engine on one call type 1 = 4 hours x \$173.47	\$ 693.88
<u>2 x 4 hours for Chief Vehicle = 8 x \$11.86/hr =</u>	<u>\$ 94.88</u>
Subtotal	\$ 2,042.68

**STAFF**

EMS

12 Apparatus Operator x 24 hours = 24 x \$40.04/hr	\$ 960.96
Subtotal	\$ 960.96

Motor Vehicle Accident

1 Apparatus Operator x 20 hours = 20 hours x \$40.04/hr	\$ 800.80
1 Chief Officer x 20 hours = 20 hours x \$89.22/hr	\$ 1,784.40
<u>Second Chief Officer on 1 call x 2.5 hours x \$89.22</u>	<u>\$ 223.05</u>
Subtotal	\$ 2,808.25

Remote Area Rescue

2 Apparatus Operator x 1 Engine x 4 hours = 8 hours x \$40.04 =	\$ 320.32
1 Chief Officer x 8 hours = 8 x \$89.22/hr =	\$ 713.76
<u>Second Chief Officer on 1 call x 4 hours =</u>	<u>\$ 356.88</u>
Subtotal	\$ 1,390.96

Total	\$ 14,958.88
x admin rate 26.2%	\$ 3,889.31
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 18,848.19</b>



**Lake Valley Fire Protection District**

**Administrative Office:** 2211 Keetak Street, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

**Phone:** (530) 577-3737

**Website:** <https://www.lakevalleyfire.org/>

County Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the residents and visitors to Lake Valley Fire Protection District (LVFPD) as well as our personnel, I would like to thank you for your approval of \$517,765 in TOT funding for FY 2024-2025 to reimburse the District for some of the personnel costs incurred responding to visitors in 2023.

We are pleased to present the following proposal and subsequent data to apply for Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) funding for FY 2025-2026. The following summary of information details an update to the tourism impacts that LVFPD experiences and the subsequent impacts to services for residents and visitors to the District.

LVFPD has provided a breakdown in personnel costs incurred for responding to visitors in 2024 for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. The District would like to impart on the Board of Supervisors the need to fund these direct tourism impacts based on the tourism impacts suffered by the District which are compounded by the following facts:

- LVFPD has experienced an increase of 40% in calls for service from 2019 to 2024. Of the 1,403 calls for service in 2024, 411 of those calls, or approximately **29%** were to visitors in the District. A little less than one third of all calls for LVFPD were to just visitors in 2024; and
- Costs for the District to respond to the 411 visitor specific emergency services, vehicle accidents and extended calls totaled **\$720,542.14** in 2024. The 411 visitor calls, and the subsequent costs associated are a direct burden to District taxpayers; and
- As of February 21, 2025, **650** active Vacation Home Rentals (VHRs) permits were located within the District boundary with a total of 944 active permits Countywide. This equates to **69%** of active VHRs in the County located in the LVFPD area alone, up 10% compared to last year.

More detailed information regarding tourism impacts can be found in the attached report. The high number of tourists to the District as over-night guests and day-trippers exacerbates an already strained system, making it difficult for LVFPD to respond to emergencies during high traffic times and major storms. The District taxpayers are shouldering the burden of emergency and medical responses for visitors. No agency has accurately documented the total number of tourists traveling to the Basin.

Funding our direct costs help cover apparatus and staff responses to visitors, freeing up existing revenue for other apparatus, equipment, or staffing requirements that the District desperately needs. If you may recall, last year we had the goal of hiring three new firefighters in the "near future." I'm pleased to report, that with the continual award of TOT funding over the last four years, we have been able to reallocate funds to allow us to hire **three new firefighters this summer**. This provides a safer, more efficient service to the community and our personnel. The additional firefighters give us flexibility and the ability to put more resources in service during high impact times. Our mission statement is to provide the highest level

of public safety services for our community, its people, and environment. With the ability to staff more firefighters, we feel we are meeting our mission statement.

Currently LVFPD only operates with two firefighters on an engine per shift at all stations (or a 2-0 staffing model). While it is anticipated for one of our staffed stations to upgrade to (3-0) staffing this summer with the new hires, the national recommendation is **four firefighters** on an engine (or a 4-0 staffing model). The lack of adequate firefighters puts residents, visitors, and our staff at greater risk; reduces our ability to respond effectively to emergencies; and requires us to wait for backup, delaying necessary action during an emergency. We hope the Board will continue to fund our direct costs so that we can continue to direct revenue where it is most needed. The attached report (Appendix B) gives a summary of the challenges we face operating with two to three firefighters on an engine.

LVFPD is thankful to the Board of Supervisor for redirecting TOT funding towards tourism impacts, but there is still much work to do. We hope that the information provided here will highlight the direct impacts tourism has on the District, and specifically the ability for LVFPD to continue to provide timely, safe emergency medical and fire protection services to the residents and visitors of the District.

Sincerely,



Chad Stephen, Fire Chief  
Lake Valley Fire Protection District





(530) 577-3737 | 2211 Keetak Street, South Lake Tahoe | lakevalleyfire.org



# Lake Valley Fire Protection District

## 2025 Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Funding Request

Submitted to El Dorado County  
March 17, 2025



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# Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) Request Summary

The following information provides an updated summary of tourism impacts to Lake Valley Fire Protection District (LVFPD or Lake Valley FPD) and the request by LVFPD for Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue allocations for direct visitor costs to offset these impacts.

Tourism impact information is divided into “South Shore Visitor” impacts related to general information on tourism in the South Shore , “Weather and Visitor Impacts” detailing impacts from a combination of weather and visitors in the District area, “District Visitor” impacts summarizing how the visitors to the District directly impact services, and “District VHRs” describing impacts by Vacation Home Rentals (VHRs) located in the District.

Please note, this is the fifth report that LVFPD has produced for the Board of Supervisors. Unfortunately, there has been no substantial update to available data regarding visitors to the South Lake Tahoe region through the Highway 50 corridor. The most recent traffic counts from Caltrans are from 2022 and the last report produced for the region that included any visitor information was the Lake Tahoe Stewardship Plan in 2023 with data from 2022.

The consultant contacted the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) in an attempt to gather more updated visitor information. Correspondence from TRPA staff indicate that the 2024 average daily visitation to the South Shore was up by about 1% from 2022, which staff note is effectively a rounding error. TRPA staff also indicated that the South Shore has seen some “flattening” of demand in recent years; that is, higher visitation in the shoulder seasons. In addition, overnight visitation (hotels + seasonal home use) is *down* compared to pre-COVID numbers, with day visitors making up the difference<sup>1</sup>. This is likely due to the restrictions in Vacation Home Rentals (VHRs) in the City of South Lake Tahoe and the unincorporated areas of the Tahoe basin in El Dorado County.

LVFPD is asking the Board of Supervisors to fund direct visitor costs for a total of **\$720,542.14**.

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<sup>1</sup> TRPA Staff, personal communication, March 2025



# Tourism Impacts

## **South Shore Visitor Impacts**

- The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) estimates that roughly 25 million visitors come to the Tahoe Basin each year, of which 42% are day visitors. This is an increase in 1 million visitors since the LVFPD 2020 TOT Funding Study. It is estimated that there will be an increase of 25% in visitation by 2035.<sup>2</sup>
- According to the Lake Tahoe Stewardship Plan, released in 2023, total number of visitor days in 2022 was almost 17 million. The region's land mass is roughly one-third the size of Yosemite National Park yet receives approximately three times the amount of visitation.<sup>3</sup>
- The entrance to the Tahoe Basin through Highway 50, within Lake Valley Fire Protection District's boundary, sees the highest percentage of travelers into the Basin than any other entrance, more than travelers on Interstate 80 through Placer County in both winter and summer months.<sup>4</sup>
- Highway 50 is projected to see an 18% increase in traffic volumes by 2040 according to SACOG2020.<sup>5</sup>
- According to El Dorado County staff, roughly 15,000 vehicles use Highway 50 through Lake Valley FPD on any given day and on holidays it can range between 20,000-25,000 vehicles. The average residential street in the District has around 1,000 vehicles passing through a day and 4,000-6,000 vehicles on holidays.<sup>6</sup>
- The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) estimates over 1.8 million visitors annually travel through the Emerald Bay, Highway 89 corridor of LVFPD.<sup>7</sup> Extreme traffic congestion resulting in hours long delays is not uncommon in the winter or summer peaks.
- Overnight visitors include campgrounds at Fallen Leaf Lake, Tahoe Valley, and Camp Richardson Resort, as well as the Camp Richardson Hotel. The District boundaries include areas such as Pope

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<sup>2</sup> TTD. January 2021. One Tahoe: A transportation funding initiative. Available online at:

<https://www.tahoetransportation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/2020-2-7-Exec-Summary-One-Tahoe-Draft-Final-Project-Report.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Lake Tahoe Stewardship Plan. 2023. Available online at: <https://stewardshiptahoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Lake-Tahoe-Stewardship-Plan-6-19-23-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> TTD. September 2017. Linking Tahoe: Corridor Connection Plan. Available online at:

<https://www.tahoetransportation.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2017-Sept-Linking-Tahoe-CCP-Adopted.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> TRPA. 2020 Regional Transportation Plan. Available online at: <https://www.trpa.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/2020-RTP-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Tolbert, J. 14 October 2022. "South Lake Tahoe traffic woes: Balancing the needs of locals and tourists." ABC 10 News.

Available online at: <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/local/south-lake-tahoe-traffic-woes/103-dac9c6d9-60b5-4b43-8664-fdc8398cba89>.

<sup>7</sup> TRPA. September 2020. State Route 89 Recreation Corridor Management Plan. Available online at: <https://www.trpa.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/archive/Final-State-Route-89-Recreation-Corridor-Management-Plan.pdf>.



Beach, Camp Richardson, and Emerald Bay. These areas are premier destinations for visitors in South Lake Tahoe. The District also serves two major ski areas: Sierra-at-Tahoe and Heavenly Ski Resort.

## Weather & Visitor Impacts

- Weather has a significant impact on tourism in the District. Heat waves in the valley bring tourists to Lake Tahoe to cool off while extreme snow conditions drive tourists to the area for snow activities. Blizzard conditions take a toll on the District as crews respond to all types of calls including vehicle accidents, medical aids, and back country rescues.<sup>8</sup>
- Calls doubled and tripled on major storm days in 2024 with response times increased by 5 to 15 minutes depending on the location from station or resource to the emergency. Backups become ‘apocalyptic’ during winter when there are highway and road closures resulting in several hours of tourists waiting on Highway 50, blocking roadways and access for emergency vehicles.<sup>9</sup>

## District Visitor Impacts

- There are approximately 11,977 permanent residents within the District<sup>10</sup> as of the 2023 Census, a decrease of 0.5% from 2022. There are 7,898 parcels in LVFPD boundaries that provide the main source of funding for the District through property tax and special assessment revenue.
- LVFPD has experienced an increase of 40% in calls for service from 2019 to 2024.<sup>11</sup> Of the 1,403 calls for service in 2024, 411 of those calls, or approximately **29%** were to visitors in the District. A little less than one third of all calls for LVFPD were to just visitors in 2024.<sup>12</sup>
- Costs for the District to respond to the 411 visitor specific emergency services, vehicle accidents and extended calls totaled **\$720,542.14** in 2024. The 411 visitor calls, and the subsequent costs associated are a direct burden to District taxpayers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> LVFPD Staff, personal communication, February 2025.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce. "Sex by Age." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B01001, 2023*, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B01001?\\_t=Populations+and+People&g=050XX00US0601751500000&v=2023](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT5Y2023.B01001?_t=Populations+and+People&g=050XX00US0601751500000&v=2023). Accessed on February 28, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> LVFPD Staff, personal communication, February 2025.

<sup>12</sup> LVFPD Staff, personal communication, February 2025.

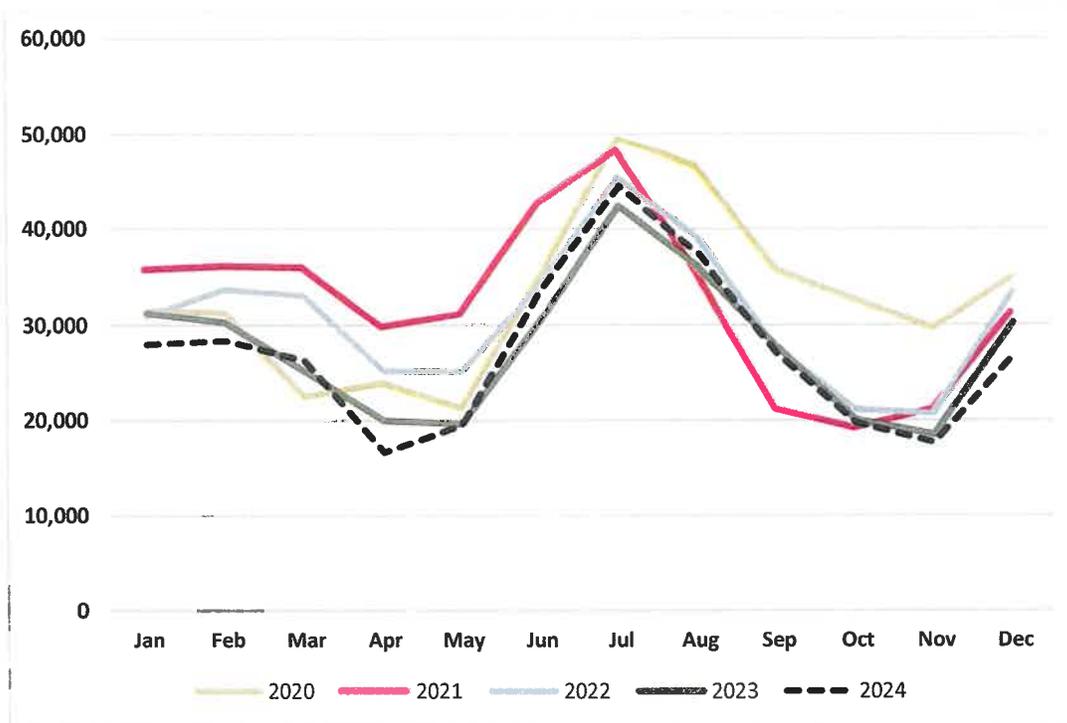
<sup>13</sup> LVFPD Staff, personal communication, February 2025.



## District Vacation Home Rental Impacts

- As of February 21, 2025, **650** active Vacation Home Rentals (VHRs) permits were located within the District boundary with a total of 944 active permits Countywide.<sup>14</sup> This equates to **69%** of active VHRs in the County located in the LVFPD area alone, up 10% compared to last year.
- Occupancy rates for vacation home rentals in the South Shore have stayed above pre-pandemic levels according to AirDNA<sup>15</sup>. Total listing days booked for all VHRs in the South Shore area for 2024 were up 2% when compared to 2019, or pre-pandemic levels. Total listing days booked in 2024 was similar to the previous year as seen in Figure 2. The last two years have seen a more normalized level of bookings, however this could be due to the passage of Measure T in the City of South Lake Tahoe which took effect in 2022 as well as the cap on vacation rentals in the El Dorado County portion of the South Lake Tahoe basin and the limitations of new rentals due to buffering restrictions.<sup>16</sup>

Figure 2: Total Nights Booked by Month (2019-2023)



<sup>14</sup> El Dorado County VHR Staff, personal communication, March 2025.

<sup>15</sup> AirDNA is the leading provider of data and analytics for the short-term rental industry. AirDNA collects short-term vacation rental data from thousands of sources, including Airbnb and VRBO/HomeAway, to build a comprehensive view of the short-term rental market. Sources of data also include private hosts (50K) and several strategic API partnerships with several large property management companies. AirDNA provides analytics for the South Lake Tahoe area. A map of the data area can be found in Appendix A.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.



- There are approximately 6,419 developed single-family residential properties in the District.<sup>17</sup> VHRs make up 10% of all single-family homes, and they accounted for roughly a 12% of all visitor calls for 2024.<sup>18</sup>
- Of the 650 active VHRs in the District, 8 are Hosted Home Rentals. According to the El Dorado County Ordinance No. 5209 updated in October 2024, Hosted Home Rental (HHR) are defined as a rental property at which a host resides and sleeps in one of the bedrooms during the period of the rental<sup>19</sup>.
- The District conducted less VHR inspections in 2024 than the previous year (253 inspections in 2024 and 437 inspections in 2023) likely due to the VHR cap and buffering imposed by the County. VHRs are inspected by LVFPD staff when new licenses are approved and bi-annually for existing licenses.<sup>20</sup>
- There are a total of 228 homes on the VHR waitlist. Of those on the waitlist, 214 homes are in the District service area, or 94%.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> El Dorado County Staff, personal communication, March 2025.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> El Dorado County. October 22, 2024. Ordinance No. 5209. Available online at:

<https://www.eldoradocounty.ca.gov/files/assets/country/v/1/documents/services/my-property/vacation-home-rental/vhr-documents/vhr-ord-5209.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Lake Valley FPD staff, personal communication, March 2025.

<sup>21</sup> El Dorado County Staff, personal communication, March 2025.



## 2024 Direct Visitor Costs

In 2024, the District identified 411 visitor calls. These calls totaled \$720,542.14 with the cost burden placed directly on District taxpayers. LVFPD does utilize a third-party collection agency and has policies in place to attempt to recoup some of these costs. However, the District is not generally able to make up the associated costs for service and was only able to recoup approximately \$43,411.05 from the collection agency for 2024. Therefore, the District is requesting the cost burden minus the reimbursement for a total of **\$677,131.09**.

The funding request is divided into three different call types and the associated costs for responding to one of each call type. The last row of each table shows the number of visitor calls for 2024 in that call type and the associated costs for the year. The three different call types are: 1) emergency medical service (EMS) call, 2) vehicle accident, and 3) extended call.

### Summary

Call Type	Equipment/ Staff	Number of hours	Number of Visitor Calls in 2022	Total Costs
Emergency Medical	Single Engine/Single Medic	2 hours	230	\$150,814.05
Vehicle Accident	2 Engines and Chief Officer	2.5 hours	107	\$253,464.92
Extended Call	3 Engines and Chief Officer	4 hours	74	\$316,263.17
<b>Total Costs</b>				<b>\$720,542.14</b>
Reimbursement from 3 <sup>rd</sup> party Collection Agency				<b>(\$43,411.05)</b>
<b>Total Requested</b>				<b>\$677,131.09</b>

### Funding Breakdown

One EMS Call – Single Engine / Single Medic (2 hours total)		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (2 hrs)
Captain	\$54.18	\$108.36
Fire Engineer	\$47.19	\$94.38
<b>Total Personnel Cost:</b>		<b>\$202.74</b>
	Hourly Rate	Total (2 hrs)
Engine Hourly Rate	\$173.47	<b>\$346.94</b>
Personnel & Equip		\$549.68
Admin Rate	19.29%	\$106.03
<b>Total Reimbursement:</b>		<b>\$655.71</b>
<b>230 Visitor Calls x Total Reimbursement</b>		<b>\$150,814.05</b>



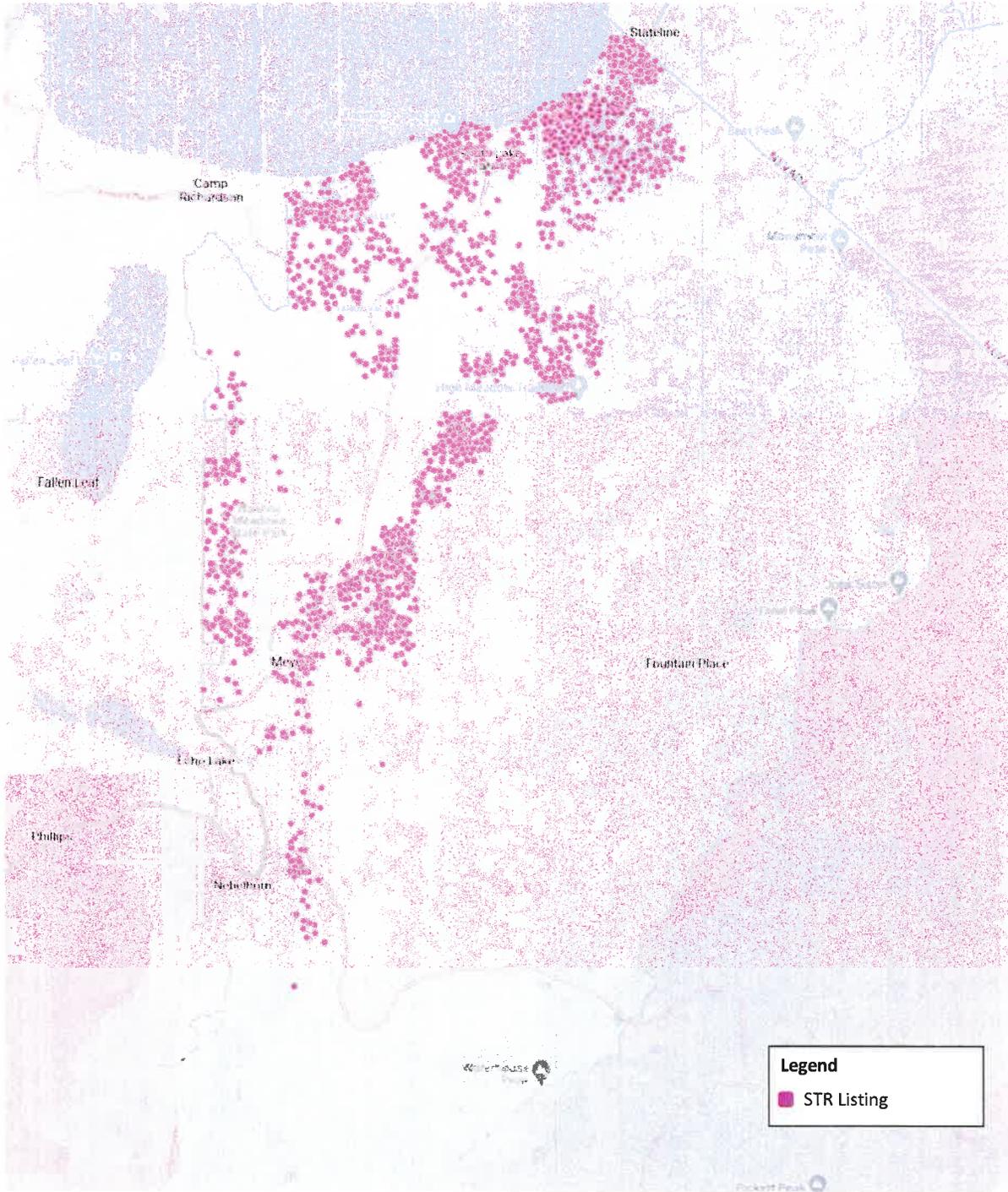
<b>One Vehicle Accident - Two Engines &amp; Chief Officer - 2.5 hours</b>		
<b>Engine Company</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Total (2.5 hrs)</b>
Captain	\$54.18	\$135.45
Engineer	\$47.19	\$117.98
Personnel cost per eng.		\$253.43
2 Engines companies		<b>\$506.85</b>
	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Total (2.5 hrs)</b>
Chief Officer	\$71.16	<b>\$177.90</b>
Engine Hourly Rate	\$173.47	<b>\$433.68</b>
2 Engines @ 2.5 hours		<b>\$867.35</b>
Personnel & Equip		\$1,985.78
Admin Rate	19.29%	\$383.06
<b>Total Reimbursement:</b>		<b>\$2,368.83</b>
<b>107 Visitor Calls x Total Reimbursement</b>		<b>\$253,464.92</b>

<b>One Extended Call - Three engines &amp; Chief Officer - 4 hours</b>		
<b>Engine Company</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Total (4 hrs)</b>
Captain	\$54.18	\$216.72
Engineer	\$47.19	\$188.76
Personnel cost per eng.		\$405.48
3 Engine Companies		<b>\$1,216.44</b>
	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Total (4 hrs)</b>
Chief Officer	\$71.16	<b>\$284.64</b>
Engine Hourly Rate	\$173.47	\$693.88
3 Engines @ 4 hours		<b>\$2,081.64</b>
Personnel & Equip		\$3,582.72
Admin Rate	19.29%	\$691.11
<b>Total Reimbursement:</b>		<b>\$4,273.83</b>
<b>74 Visitor Calls x Total Reimbursement</b>		<b>\$316,263.17</b>



## Appendix A: AirDNA Data Area





**Appendix B: District Staffing**  
**Shortage Information**



## District Staffing Shortages

Lake Valley Fire Protection District currently operates with (2-0) staffing, or two firefighting personnel to an engine on shift for all stations. With the continued support of the County Board of Supervisors, we anticipate the (2-0) staffing to transition to (3-0) staffing in the summer of 2025 for one of our stations. Our other station remains at (2-0) staffing.<sup>22</sup> The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) sets staffing standard recommendations nationwide. The NFPA Standard 1710 recommends career fire departments operate under a (4-0) staffing model, meaning four firefighters on an engine.<sup>23</sup> The District operates as a career department; therefore, the District does not meet recommended staffing standards according to the NFPA. In general, most rural agencies are not able to meet (4-0) staffing, thus (3-0) staffing has become the minimum acceptable level of staff for many fire service providers throughout the State of California.<sup>24</sup> As of the most recent Countywide Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services MSR/SOI Study for El Dorado County LAFCO, ten (or 77 percent) of fire agencies in the County are not meeting the minimum standard of (3-0) staffing some or all of the time.<sup>25</sup>

According to California Division of Occupational Health and Safety (Cal OSHA) requirements, the U.S. Department of Commerce: National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), and research conducted at San Diego State University, lower staffing levels are dangerous for firefighting personnel as well as residents and visitors. Having fewer firefighters on an engine reduces the ability for the unit to respond and requires waiting for mutual or automatic aid to meet Cal OSHA standards. In general, research and studies found that (2-0) staffing models are seriously deficient in keeping ahead of wildfire and slower for key activities in relation to fire suppression than (3-0) and (4-0) staffing models. For example, a (4-0) staffing model operating on a low-hazard structure fire completed laddering and ventilation (for life safety and rescue) 30 percent faster than the (2-0) staffing model and 25 percent faster than the (3-0) staffing model. The (3-0) staffing model started and completed a primary search and rescue 25 percent faster than the (2-0) model. The (4-0) and (5-0) model started and completed a primary search six percent faster than the (3-0) model and 30 percent faster than the (2-0) model. For this research, a 10 percent difference was equivalent to just over one minute of time for primary search and rescue operations. The (2-0) staffing took 57 seconds longer than

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<sup>22</sup> LVFPD staff, personal communication, March 2025

<sup>23</sup> National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). 2020. NFPA 1720: Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations, Emergency Medical Operations, and Special Operations to the Public by Career Fire Departments. Available online at: <https://www.nfpa.org/codes-and-standards/all-codes-and-standards/list-of-codes-and-standards/detail?code=1710>.

<sup>24</sup> NFPA. December 2021. Staffing & Operations as part of the Fifth Needs Assessment of the US Fire Service. Available online at: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/News-and-Research/Fire-statistics-and-reports/Emergency-responders/Needs-Assessment/osfifthneedsassessmentStaffingOperations.ashx>

<sup>25</sup> El Dorado Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). April 2022. Final Countywide Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Update Main Report Volume I of II. Available online at: <https://www.ediafco.us/files/a9242b5d4/Volume+I+-+Main+Report+-+Final+Countywide+Fire+Protection+and+Emergency+Medical+Services+MSR+and+SOI+Update.pdf>



(3-0) staffing models to stretch hose line and took 87 seconds longer than (4-0) staffing models.<sup>26,27,28</sup> These studies and research demonstrate that, though (3-0) staffing is less efficient and less safe for firefighters than (4-0) or (5-0) staffing models, it is more efficient and safer for firefighters than a (2-0) staffing model.

According to research conducted by the California Office of Emergency Service Firefighting Resources of Southern California Organized for Potential Emergencies (Cal OES FIRESCOPE), agencies of medium to smaller size can be challenged to maintain geographical coverage at times of increased emergency activity. Even under normal threat levels, a fairly routine call for service can deplete the availability of their resources and result in a degree of drawdown. If an incident becomes prolonged or requires the commitment of resources beyond the initial response, the agencies capabilities can be affected. In the case of some smaller agencies, a single resource committed to an incident can result in extreme drawdown and challenge their ability to meet their basic jurisdictional coverage responsibilities.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> NIST. April 2010. Report on Residential Fireground Field Experiments. Available online at:

[https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/el/fire\\_research/Report-on-Residential-Fireground-Field-Experiments.pdf](https://www.nist.gov/system/files/documents/el/fire_research/Report-on-Residential-Fireground-Field-Experiments.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Rahn, Matt, Ph.D. (2010). 2010 California Wildfire Staffing Study - Wildfire Research Report No. 2. San

Diego State University. Montezuma Publishing. Available online at: <https://wildfirescience.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/6-2010-StaffingStudy1.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/1998-04-25#:~:text=This%20provision%20requires%20that%20at%20least%20two%20in%2Ftwo%20out%22>

<sup>29</sup> California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) FIRESCOPE. April 2020. Drawdown Consideration for Fire Agencies. Incident Command System Publication - MACS 408. Available online at:

<https://firescope.caioes.ca.gov/ICS%20Documents/MACS%20408.pdf>





# North Tahoe Fire Protection District

*Steve Leighton – Fire Chief*

## Request for Funding: Tourism Occupancy Tax

March 17, 2025

Dear County Staff and Supervisors,

North Tahoe Fire Protection District is presenting the following Request for Funding on behalf of El Dorado County residents and visitors in response to El Dorado County's invitation. We appreciate the Board of Supervisors' solicitation of funding requests from local fire districts to address tourism impacts.

North Tahoe Fire Protection District is an all-risk service provider that protects various unincorporated communities within two counties on the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe. North Tahoe Fire protects the northeastern El Dorado County communities on the west shore of Lake Tahoe, from the Placer County line in Tahoma, through Meeks Bay, Rubicon, Emerald Bay to north of Cascade Falls; North Tahoe Fire provides primary response via mutual aid to Lake Valley Fire.

North Tahoe Fire is experiencing new risks in many areas including increased visitation for a variety of reasons, leading to many novice visitors recreating in our extreme back country environment. As visitation continues to grow, along with an increase in call volume, it is essential we continue to receive additional funding to ease the impact of the increase in visitors to the Tahoe Basin for tourism-related calls.

We appreciate this opportunity and the County's recognition of the impact of tourism on our operations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Leighton".

Steve Leighton, Fire Chief  
North Tahoe Fire Protection District

## Tourism Occupancy Tax Funding Request

Project	Amount
<b>Visitor Calls for Service 2024 Impacts</b>	<b>\$488,745.85</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$488,745.85</b>

North Tahoe Fire Protection District provides service to residents and visitors of El Dorado County encompassing 14 square miles on the west shore of Lake Tahoe. North Tahoe Fire requests funding assistance for services provided as a result of tourism and visitation. Station 58 in Meeks Bay responded to 369 incidents related to tourism.

HAZARD/EMS CALL 1 CHFO / 1 ENG / 1 AMB		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (2 hr)
Captain	\$ 55.91	\$ 111.82
Engineer	\$ 46.15	\$ 92.30
Firefighter PM x 2	\$ 41.40	\$ 165.60
Total Personnel Cost:		\$ 369.72
Chief Fire Officer	\$ 71.54	\$ 143.08
Engine Hourly Rate:	\$ 173.47	\$ 346.94
<b>Total Personnel and Equipment:</b>		<b>\$ 859.74</b>
OES Admin Rate	19.896%	\$ 171.05
<b>Total Reimbursement:</b>		<b>\$ 1,030.79</b>
2024 Total Calls	301	<b>\$ 310,268.95</b>
Visitor 90% of calls		<b>\$ 279,242.06</b>

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT 1 CHFO / 2 ENG / 1 AMB		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (2.5 hrs)
Captain	\$ 55.91	\$ 139.78
Engineer	\$ 46.15	\$ 115.38
Firefighter PM x 2	\$ 41.40	\$ 207.00
Total Personnel Cost:		\$ 462.15
2 Engine Companies		\$ 924.30
Chief Fire Officer	\$ 71.54	\$ 178.85
Engine Hourly Rate:	\$ 173.47	\$ 867.35
<b>Total Personnel and Equipment:</b>		<b>\$ 1,970.50</b>
OES Admin Rate	19.896%	\$ 392.05
<b>Total Reimbursement:</b>		<b>\$ 2,362.55</b>
2024 Total Calls	45	<b>\$ 106,314.78</b>
Visitor 90% of calls		<b>\$ 95,683.30</b>

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT 1 CHFO / 3 ENG		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (4 hrs)
Captain	\$ 55.91	\$ 223.64
Engineer	\$ 46.15	\$ 184.60
Firefighter PM x 2	\$ 41.40	\$ 331.20
Total Personnel Cost:		\$ 739.44
3 Engine Companies		\$ 2,218.32
Chief Fire Officer	\$ 71.54	\$ 286.16
Engine Hourly Rate:	\$ 173.47	\$ 2,081.64
<b>Total Personnel and Equipment:</b>		<b>\$ 4,586.12</b>
OES Admin Rate	19.896%	\$ 912.45
<b>Total Reimbursement:</b>		<b>\$ 5,498.57</b>
2024 Total Calls	23	<b>\$ 126,467.21</b>
Visitor 90% of calls		<b>\$ 113,820.49</b>

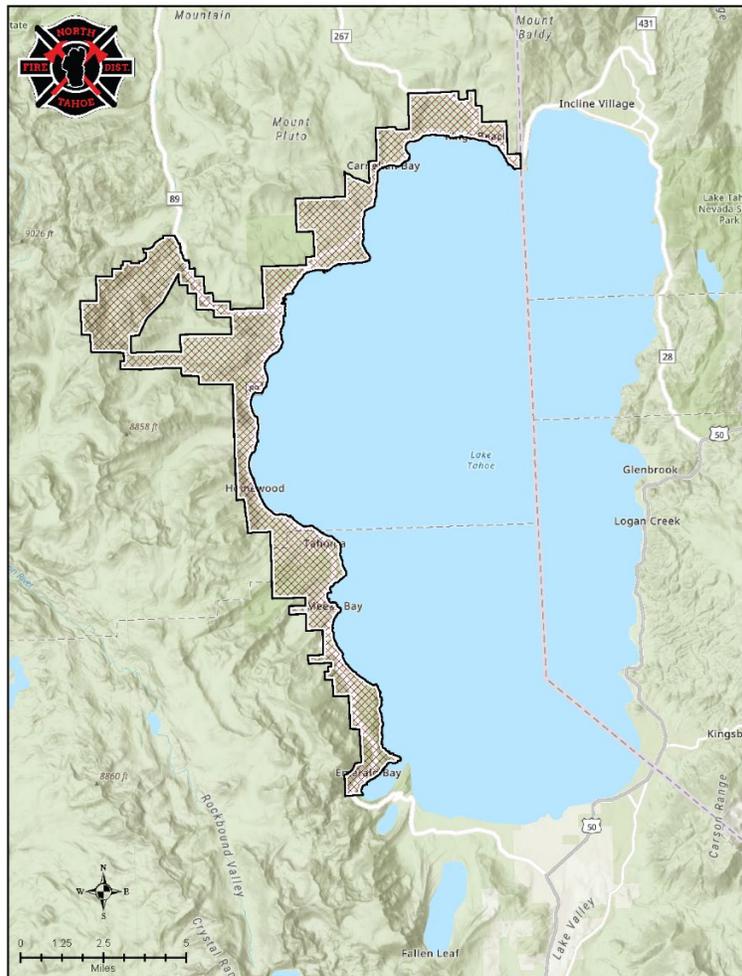
<b>2024 TOTAL VISITOR COSTS:</b>	<b>\$ 488,745.85</b>
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## 2025 Request for Funding: Tourism Occupancy Tax

### North Tahoe Fire Protection District on Behalf of

### El Dorado County Residents and Visitors

North Tahoe Fire’s mission is to provide the highest possible level of fire, rescue, and advanced level emergency medical services to the communities we serve, including the service area of 14 square miles along Tahoe’s west shoreline in El Dorado County. North Tahoe Fire’s overall service area expands from the Nevada state line in Kings Beach, to the south in Emerald Bay in Lake Valley Fire’s boundary, out to Alpine Meadows, with ambulance service provided to Olympic Valley Fire’s service area. North Tahoe Fire protects the northeastern El Dorado County communities on the west shore of Lake Tahoe, from the Placer County line in Tahoma to Emerald Bay north of Cascade Falls. North Tahoe Fire provides primary response via mutual aid for Lake Valley Fire’s service area. In the winter months, North Tahoe Fire is the only response agency for these El Dorado County communities on the west shore of Lake Tahoe due to road closures during the winter months.



Lake Tahoe is the most visited national forest in the state of California. At one-third the size of Yosemite, Lake Tahoe regularly sees three times as many tourists as Yosemite before the increase in visitation since the onset of the pandemic. The Lake Tahoe region is a popular destination attracting 24+million<sup>1</sup> people each year for hiking, skiing, mountain biking, camping, water sports and other recreational activities. The level of visitation has remained constant over the years, and local agencies continue to struggle to manage these impacts. North Tahoe Fire responds to the increase in calls for service, including medical calls and back country rescues. Traffic congestion on State Route 89 due to the proximity to Homewood Ski Resort, Palisades Alpine and Palisades Tahoe in Olympic Valley results in extended transport times to and from Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee or Renown in Reno, Nevada. North Tahoe Fire rarely transports patients to Barton Hospital in South Lake Tahoe due to the distance.

North Tahoe Fire experiences substantial impacts from visitation that are magnified due to narrow roads, and limited parking. According to the SR-89 Corridor Management Plan<sup>2</sup>, there is one parking space for every 813 annual vehicle entries which impacts our ability to reach patients in an efficient timeframe.

The North Tahoe Fire service area in El Dorado County consists of over 2,300 parcels with an assessed valuation of nearly \$1.5 billion dollars.<sup>3</sup> Yet has only 646 fulltime residents/registered voters and few commercial businesses, and hosts over 25% of the permitted Vacation Home Rental inventory in all of El Dorado County. This is primarily due to its proximity to the iconic features located in the North Tahoe Fire response zone on the west shore. These sites include Homewood Ski Resort, Meeks Bay Resort, Sugar Pine Point State Park, Ehrman Mansion, McKinney-Rubicon Trailhead, Rubicon Bay, DL Bliss State Park, Emerald Bay State Park, access to Desolation Wilderness, Emerald Bay, Vikingsholm, Eagle Falls and Inspiration Point to name a few. The state parks and their camp sites on the west shore attract more than 7,500 visitors daily. The vantage points from locations such as Inspiration Point, Vikingsholm and Eagle Falls draw millions of visitors all year long. These sites are popular for various recreational uses, including water recreation, site seeing, biking, hiking, back country camping and skiing. Recreation activity has expanded to include the new Maritime Heritage Underwater Trail in Emerald Bay, drawing scuba and snorkel diving visitors, and the new Lake Tahoe Water Trail draws daytrip paddlers, with four Water Trail Trailhead sites located within the North Tahoe Fire service area.

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<sup>1</sup> Standards of Coverage and Deployment Plan – 2018: <https://www.ntfire.net/standards-of-cover-2018>

<sup>2</sup> SR-89 Corridor Management Plan: <https://www.trpa.org/wp-content/uploads/Final-State-Route-89-Recreation-Corridor-Management-Plan.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> County of El Dorado Auditor Certified Values by Tax Base, Tax Year 2023: <https://www.edcgov.us/Government/Auditor-Controller/proptaxreports/Documents/RTC601AVsummary2023-24.pdf>

North Tahoe Fire’s service area includes extensive state park lands of 841 acres, federal forest service lands of 1,244 acres and beaches receiving extensive visitation and calls for service year-round. The influx of lodging guests and day-use visitors on weekends/holidays surges to approximately 75,000 during peak season which requires North Tahoe Fire to upstaff over 26 weekends and 8 holidays annually to meet the volume of calls. Some of these calls are complex due to backcountry rescues which require additional time and staff. An analysis performed by Stantec using cell phone data purchased from Air Sage in the months of February, July and August of 2014, arrived at a statistic of visitors entering the Tahoe Basin 24.4 million times. This number is at an 80% confidence level, which means a range of 19.5–29 million visitors in any given year. The data also showed winter and summer day use accounted for 42-43% of the volume and the visitors staying at least one night.

In addition to the general surge in visitation, North Tahoe Fire sees direct impacts due to organized events to include the Reno-Tahoe Odyssey Relay Race, with legs 13-15 of the 178-mile race, as well as America’s Most Beautiful Bike Ride, Concourse d’Elegance, and the Lake Tahoe Triathlon. North Tahoe Fire provides a dedicated ambulance for each of these organized events with no offsets for the additional impacts. The other stations in the District must provide coverage to respond to calls for service surrounding the events.

*El Dorado County’s Strategic Plan* prioritizes a safe work environment, maintaining public facilities and associated services that protect the community, promptly responding to emergencies and calls for service, and improved communication and coordination between public safety agencies. This project meets these priorities.



## Tourism Impacts<sup>4</sup>

Visitation has increased well beyond what the following images portray, along with an associated increase in calls for service. North Tahoe Fire saw a 29% higher call volume than in pre-pandemic levels with a continued increase of at least 5% each year. While the Lake Tahoe Basin is known for its natural beauty, drawing millions of tourists each year, the impact of tourism places significant strain on emergency service delivery. This requires North Tahoe Fire to upstaff to meet the demand of the increase in calls. The presence of local cooperation and availability of emergency services can help mitigate the risks of tourism in the area. For North Tahoe Fire to effectively provide services during peak tourism seasons, it requires proper planning, coordination and adequate funding. There needs to be a careful balance to avoid over-burdening our emergency resources beyond their capabilities.



*Our fire apparatus are continually at risk of damage due to traffic from tourism that impedes our ability to safely proceed throughout the District.*

<sup>4</sup> Photos beginning on Page 5 are courtesy of SR-89 Corridor Management Plan – Existing Conditions Summary Report, May 2019: <http://www.tpa.org/wp-content/uploads/SR-89-Existing-Conditions.pdf>



Cars park over the white fog line and pedestrians regularly walk in the travel lanes to get to their destination.



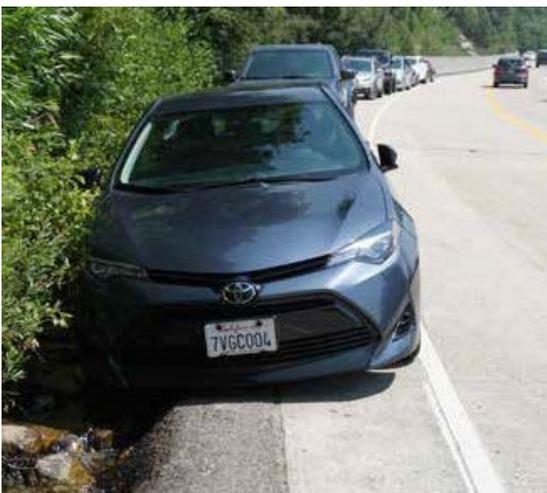
Pedestrians hug the viaduct's guardrail and walk in a 12- to 18-inch shoulder as they walk from their car to their destination.



Motorists illegally park in no parking areas and block bus stops.



Winter access to the corridor is popular for backcountry access and for those just wanting to enjoy the view. The above picture was taken just a few hours after the road was reopened after a snowstorm.



Vehicles park along the viaduct and in stormwater improvement projects.



Inspiration Point is so popular, people queue to take their turn for a picture or to read the interpretive panels.



Pedestrians often walk in the travel lane, with traffic, to access their recreation site.



Recreational cyclists participate in sanctioned and unsanctioned cycling events, frequently impacting traffic and the ability to maneuver through traffic in the SR-89 corridor.<sup>5</sup>



The congestion on the 89 corridor makes emergency response challenging and inefficient.

<sup>5</sup> Photo Credit <https://totalwomenscycling.com/road-cycling/sportives/updated-daily-womens-amgen-tour-california-2016>