



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0058, **Version:** 1

Planning and Building Department, Tahoe Planning & Stormwater Division, recommending the Board authorize a \$10,000 General Fund contribution toward a national destination management consultant contract and up to 40 hours of staff time to participate in the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Responsible Recreation and Tourism Initiative.

FUNDING: General Fund.

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) is kicking off a Responsible Recreation and Tourism Initiative and they have asked Basin partners, including the County, to participate. Public and private partners engaged in the process so far include the City of South Lake Tahoe, Washoe County, Tahoe Conservancy, Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, North Lake Tahoe Resort Association, Incline Village Crystal Bay Visitors Bureau, USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, Nevada Division of Outdoor Recreation, Tahoe Fund, and Visit Truckee. Staff recommends contributing \$10,000 to the effort and authorizing up to 40 hours of staff time to participate in the initiative.

The partnership will select a leading national destination management consultant firm to guide the process in collaboration with a Steering Committee. The total budget for the planning work is \$175,000. To date, the partnership has secured \$120,000 and is actively seeking the remaining amount.

Ultimately, the initiative aims to achieve the following:

- Create a shared vision for the future of tourism
- Consider a new economic model
- Develop strategies to influence stewardship
- Provide sound baseline information and performance measures
- Set the course for coordinated action and decision making

The result of the Consultant's efforts will be a professional white paper on the status and trends of tourism in the Tahoe Basin, as well as a vision and mission statement, and project workplan for the Steering Committee in order to implement the strategies and tactics that they agree upon as a result of this process. The deliverables will benefit the County from an economic development standpoint and can help us better manage our limited resources in Tahoe and sustain our infrastructure (i.e. roads) into the future.

Background

Lake Tahoe receives approximately 15 million annual visits. To put this in perspective, Lake Tahoe is roughly one-third the size of Yosemite National Park, yet receives three times the number of visits. And, of those visits, approximately 40-42% are day trippers. Tahoe's \$5 billion annual economy is undeniably based on tourism and outdoor recreation. Yet, the region remains heavily reliant on

outdated economic models that value quantity over quality and ultimately make Tahoe's communities and businesses and the environment more susceptible to boom and bust visitor cycles.

Basin Partners agree that it is time to be more intentional about how the region wants to present Lake Tahoe, what expectations to hold out to those who come here, and how to tackle systemic challenges the region is facing in visitor management. The initiative will attempt to "see the whole picture" of how visitation is impacting Tahoe's environment, its economy, the users experience, and its communities.

The allure of accessible outdoor activities and climate change impacts (such as extreme weather and wildfire events) will continue to drive more and more people to the Lake Tahoe-Truckee region. The COVID-19 pandemic was also a wakeup call for the Tahoe basin. Visitation surges, new patterns of recreation use, and careless behavior are putting a strain on the infrastructure, environment, and local economies.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose to not contribute \$10,000 to the initiative.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Planning and Building Department, Economic Development Division

CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS

Approve as recommended.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

It is anticipated that the Planning and Building Department will have sufficient departmental savings in the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget to fund this effort, and no budget amendment is necessary.

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

N/A

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Healthy Communities, Economic Development

CONTACT

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