



US 50 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS INDICATES POTENTIAL ANNUAL RETAIL INCREASE OF \$16-\$25 MILLION

Feb. 21, 2013 (*Stateline, Nev.*) – A recent US Highway 50 economic analysis indicates that a completed downtown area outlined within the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization project (aka Loop Road), City of South Lake Tahoe’s General Area Plan and the South Shore Vision Plan would provide for an annual retail sales increase of \$16-\$25 million.

A revitalized downtown, or “complete streets” concept, includes a combination of upgraded elements: wider sidewalks, bike lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent crossing opportunities, median islands and accessible pedestrian signals. The project would support the conditions for future development, from which the potential exists for more than a billion dollars in private construction activity, numerous short and long-term employment prospects as well as other recreational, environmental and community benefits.

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc., a Sacramento-based land economics consulting firm commissioned by the Tahoe Transportation District in fall 2012, utilized a multi-dimensional approach for the economic analysis. EPS reviewed current and historical conditions prevalent on South Shore to identify the community’s economic indicators: performance, key trends and competitive position as a tourism destination. Case studies of similar tourism-based destinations with comparable amenities and economic vitality were also evaluated. Additional research was then reviewed of communities that constructed roadway projects to enhance financial conditions. EPS also performed outreach to local business owners/operators, and administered a survey of business owners within the Stateline area to assess business trends, customer composition, and the relationship of commercial activities to the surrounding transportation network. These responses were used to characterize the potential for growth in commercial activity resulting from roadway realignment.

EPS examined local and visitor spending in the current shopping district to determine opportunities for retail growth. It indicated potential for increased local spending of 5-10% and visitor spending of 20-30% based on enhanced visitation to the South Shore and increased regional market share. These factors would lead to an estimated \$16 to \$25 million increase in annual retail sales.

Nationally, the retail industry has seen major transformations in the past 10-15 years with the development of mixed-use shopping centers. These districts, or main streets are walkable and

offer a variety of dining, shopping and entertainment that appeal to a range of demographics, age groups and income levels.

According to case studies, a “main street” or “complete streets” district is fundamental to revitalization. Existing businesses, hotels, restaurants and retail shops would also benefit by way of the proposed projects potential to boost overall tourism and visitation. Other communities, including Livermore, Sutter Creek and Lancaster, California, Breckenridge, Colorado have successfully adopted similar approaches to creating a downtown/main street district.

Tourism and visitor-services are the largest economic drivers for the destination and accounts for more than 50% of total jobs in the Lake Tahoe Basin. However, several indicators related to tourism in South Shore has demonstrated substantial decline for years, indicative of the lack of investment in tourism-related infrastructure and amenities.

EPS discovered through its outreach and survey process, that the most common complaint from Stateline area customers is related to lack of parking resources. Other criticisms included limited access to the lake, shortage of recreation and entertainment options for children, perceived blighted conditions, traffic congestion and lack of sidewalks. Respondents also provided suggestions they believe would benefit the district: additional recreational options, upgraded amenities, high-end accommodations, sports complex, event or convention center, more fine-dining restaurants and more options for children and families.

Many believe that South Shore needs to reinvent itself to create a more viable tourism destination with various improvements. There is potential for possible short-term impacts to businesses related to construction of the US 50 project, however, the prospects for long-term were considered vast and outweigh potential negative impacts.

The US 50/South Shore Revitalization Project is a possible realignment of Highway 50 between Lake Parkway in Nevada and Pioneer Trail in California. A reclassification from federal highway to local street status would provide for local area control and development of a local “main street.” Various alternatives are currently being vetted through the public process for the Environmental Impact Study (EIS). A decision will be made after the completion of the EIS.

The City’s General Area Plan acts as the "constitution" for making rational decisions regarding long-term physical development. The general plan expresses the community's development goals and incorporates public policies relative to the distribution of future public and private land uses. Typically, a general plan is designed to address the issues facing the City for the next 15-20 years. Within its current transportation plan, US 50 would be rerouted behind the casinos on the mountain side, complementing the proposed Loop Road project.

The South Shore Vision Plan, initiated by the South Tahoe Alliance of Resorts, is focused on the properties adjacent to US Highway 50 between Kahle Drive in Nevada and Ski Run Boulevard in California.

The TTD is currently guiding multiple projects providing lake wide connectivity throughout the Tahoe Basin to improve safety, mobility and lake clarity while reducing traffic congestion.

The **East Shore Express**, a pilot Park and Ride bus service from Incline Village to Sand Harbor Beach State Recreation Area generated 12,155 rides between June 15 and Labor Day last summer. TTD also partnered with the United States Forest Service, Nevada Division of State Parks, Nevada Department of Transportation, Nevada Highway Patrol and Washoe County School District on the project.

The **Incline Gateway**, the Tahoe Basin's first roundabout at Mount Rose Highway where State Route 28 meets SR 431, was officially dedicated October 17, 2012. The public/private partnership included cooperative efforts with the Nevada Department of Transportation, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Washoe County, Incline Village General Improvement District, Q&D Construction, and the Incline Gateway Committee, the public art organization that commissioned local artist June Towill Brown to create bronze replicas of native animals.

The first mile of **America's Most Beautiful Bikeway - South Demonstration Project** was completed in the October 2012. The 3.2-mile route between Stateline and Round Hill is part of an eventual 30+ mile segment of the Nevada Stateline to Stateline Bikeway along the east shore.

SR 89/Fanny Bridge Community Revitalization Project is exploring alternatives to enhance the Tahoe City community while preserving a piece of its history and easing extreme traffic congestion.

For details on Tahoe Transportation District and its current projects, visit www.TahoeTransportation.org or call (775) 589-5500.

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Tahoe Transportation District

The Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) is responsible for the implementation and management of transportation projects and programs in the Tahoe Basin. The organization has facilitated many area safety infrastructure projects, including bicycle paths, roadway improvements, pedestrian thoroughfares, water quality and water shed improvements and public transit solutions