

Chapter 3

TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The transportation and circulation element is a supplement to TRPA's Regional Transportation Plan/Air Quality Plan (RTP/AQP) and to the Transportation Element of El Dorado County's General Plan. Consistent with these plans, this chapter lists the specific policies applicable to the community plan and describes the improvements necessary to implement it. Specific capital improvements and schedules are found in Chapter 7, Implementation.

The plan's transportation goal is to reduce dependence on the private auto mobile through a series of incremental actions incrementally. This goal will be accomplished by clustering land uses to eliminate short trips, providing convenience goods and services to nearby residents, thus diverting trips destined for South Lake Tahoe and providing bicycle and pedestrian paths to encourage alternative transportation.

A. EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Streets and Highways

U.S. Highway 50 and California State Route 89 serve as the primary highway links in and through the community plan area. U.S. 50 enters the Tahoe Basin a short distance away over Echo Summit. It provides the main point of access from the west slope and central valley population centers. U.S. 50 is a two lane highway with a continuous, two-way center turn lane between California 89 and Santa Fe Street. Pioneer Trail, classified as a minor arterial roadway, intersects U.S. 50 immediately north of the community plan boundary. It is an important intersection in the area connecting Meyers to South Lake Tahoe and Stateline. Eight collector streets serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods and intersect either U.S. 50 or California 89. California 89 also provides entry into the Tahoe Basin from Hope Valley and outlying communities in Alpine County.

U.S. 50 and California 89 are designated as state scenic highways through the plan area. Both are designated as TRPA regional scenic highway corridors. The TRPA designation includes all lands visible within one thousand feet from the edge of right-of-way for both highways.

Perhaps the most significant physical feature in Meyers is the U.S. 50 right-of-way. Originally planned to contain a four lane, limited access freeway and frontage roads, it contains only two travel lanes and a center turn lane. It varies in width from approximately 100 feet near Yanks' Station to 280 feet in West Meyers. Undeveloped land within the right-of-way is mostly disturbed and contains numerous unpermitted signs, parking and outdoor retail displays. It has adversely affected the community in terms of circulation, water quality, site planning, architectural design and business activity. See Figure 3-1.

Transit Service

El Dorado County presently operates limited transit service to the plan area. It provides route deviation, on-demand transit service known as Bus Plus, which is operated by

Area Transit Management under contract to the County. It operates twenty four hour a day and serves the unincorporated area of El Dorado County in the Meyers area. Persons who wish to ride Bus Plus call the service in advance to arrange to be picked up. It is coordinated with South Tahoe Area Ground Express (STAGE) transit service within the City of South Lake Tahoe and Stateline. Parking Facilities

Most existing uses have on-site parking although little, if any of it, is organized or marked. Several uses along U.S. 50 in the West Meyers area use parking within the adjacent non-operational right-of-way. In most cases, the right-of-way parking exists without permits or adequate water quality control measures. With the exception of uses which use the right-of-way for parking, the supply of parking is generally adequate. Right-of-way parking is being improved as part of constructing the Pat Lowe Memorial Bike Trail.

Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities

A Class I bicycle trail, known as the Pat Lowe Memorial Bike Trail, runs along the south side of U.S. 50 from Pioneer Trail to California 89. Phase II of the project along the north side of U.S. 50 is scheduled for construction during 1994. An existing dirt trail runs along the east side of California 89 connecting the plan area with residential neighbor hoods of the Upper Lake Valley (Christmas Valley). The trail is used by equestrian riders as well as off-road bicyclists and pedestrians. Other informal dirt paths connect the plan area to adjacent residential neighborhoods or nearby open space.

Existing Traffic Conditions

There are two distinct sets of traffic conditions in Meyers: free-flowing and congested. Most of the time vehicle traffic on U.S. 50, California 89 and intersecting side streets flows freely. This generally occurs during weekday periods throughout most of the year except for holidays which fall or are observed on a weekday.

Congested traffic conditions generally occur during weekends and holidays. The normal pattern involves visitors entering the basin on Fridays and Saturdays and leaving the basin on Sundays or on weekday holidays. It causes severe backups and queues on U.S. 50 for motorists travelling back and forth over Echo Summit. During winter snowstorms the situation can be easily compounded by chain-up and snow removal procedures. Congestion caused by U.S. 50 traffic exiting the basin produces backups at intersections within the plan area including California 89 and most side streets. This is especially true for vehicles (generally local residents) attempting to make left turns. During periods of particularly bad congestion, the backup of traffic on U.S. 50 traffic leaving the basin can extend all the way into the City of South Lake Tahoe. When this occurs, traffic in Meyers can become gridlocked.

1990 Caltrans traffic counts on U.S. 50 through Meyers indicate peak hour traffic (summer weekend) of 2,650 vehicles at the California 89 intersection and 1,950 vehicles at the Pioneer Trail intersection. Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) at the same points was estimated at 17,300 and 13,600, respectively.

In 1981, TRPA estimated the Vehicle Miles of Travel on a peak summer day within the community plan area at 9,974. By 1987, region wide VMT in creased by approximately 10.2%. Reducing VMT is an important component of the plan. It is more fully discussed in Chapter 4.

The 1992 Lake Tahoe Airport Master Plan Draft EIR/EIS estimated the level of service at

the signalized U.S. 50/Pioneer Trail intersection to be at level "C", based on a volume/capacity ratio of 0.71. Level "C" represents stable, free flowing conditions. Although unsignalized, the U.S. 50/California 89 intersection is often congested on peak weekends, and likely exceeds level "D".

B. COMMUNITY PLAN TRANSPORTATION OBJECTIVES AND SPECIAL POLICIES

Utilizing the community plan goals established in Chapter 1, the following objectives and special policies shall be implemented as part of the community plan. Objectives represent desired ends or results. Policies are implemented as the means to achieve objectives.

Transportation and Circulation Goal:

Redevelop the transportation system within the community plan area to reduce reliance on the private automobile, improve circulation and provide opportunities to experience Meyers as a pedestrian or cyclist.

Objectives and Special Policies:

1. Implement transportation and circulation improvements in Meyers to improve existing conditions and achieve the plan's transportation and circulation goal.

Policy: El Dorado County, TRPA and Caltrans shall implement transportation improvements called for in the Regional Transportation Plan/Air Quality Plan. The improvements generally include the Pat Lowe Memorial Bike Trail along U.S. 50 and expansion of El Dorado County transit service.

Policy: All uses within the community plan with 50 or more employees shall implement transportation demand management strategies (TDM) including, but not limited to, employer-based trip reduction programs, ride sharing programs and transit incentives.

2. Identify opportunities to reduce traffic speeds through Meyers without adversely affecting air quality. Consider using right-of-way improvements and traffic controls to achieve the objective.

Policy: Maintain Level of Service of "D" or better at U.S. 50/Pioneer Trail and U.S. 50/California 89 intersections consistent with the RTP/AQP.

3. Encourage El Dorado County, transit providers and recreation area shuttles to increase transit service to and from Meyers. Provide high quality transit stops and facilities which encourage ridership and are designed consistent with the Community Plan Design Review Guidelines.

Policy: Strategically locate transit stops in each land use district as the need and demand is demonstrated.

Policy: Transit shelters shall be provided at all transit stops. Transit shelters shall be designed consistent with the Community Plan Design Review Guidelines.

4. Provide park and ride opportunities in Meyers. Encourage the use of shared community parking areas which can serve the land use districts.

Policy: Develop a community park and ride facility within the community plan

area which can be served by transit and recreation area shuttles. The preferred site is the vacant State of California parcels adjacent to the Agricultural Inspection Station.

5. In consultation with Caltrans, TRPA and the California Highway Patrol cooperatively redesign the chain-up areas and modify chain-up procedures including short term truck parking, along U.S. 50. Consider using the park and ride facility adjacent to the Agricultural Inspection Station as an alternate chain-up area. Provide community input and assistance in developing and implementing the improvements.

Policy: Caltrans, the California Highway Patrol, TRPA and other interested parties shall develop an action plan to improve chain control operations which minimize adverse impacts to circulation and traffic flow and provide safe and efficient chain-up opportunities. This may include developing a designated chain-up area(s) along U.S. 50.

6. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle linkages between land uses. Accommodate pedestrians throughout the community plan area by providing safe, functional pathways.

Policy: Support development of the Pat Lowe Memorial Bike Trail.

7. Reduce the number of vehicular access points and other points of conflict along U.S. 50. Encourage the use of shared driveways along U.S. 50. Coordinate the access locations with the planned U.S. 50 center median.

Policy: As a condition of project approval, reduce or consolidate the number of access points along U.S. 50 to improve traffic flow and eliminate vehicle conflicts with pedestrians and bicyclists. This policy shall apply to uses with more than one U.S. 50 access and to adjoining uses with access points less than 100 feet apart where the site layouts will accommodate the combined access without major modification.

8. Recognize the status of U.S. 50 and California 89 as state and regionally-designated scenic highway corridors. Maintain and improve the scenic quality of the corridors and their viewsheds.

Policy: Transportation projects shall be designed consistent with the Community Design Plan and Design Review Guidelines.

Policy: Request Caltrans to implement a snow removal and snow haul program to remove plowed snow from in front of U.S. 50 businesses. Assist in developing alternate snow storage sites and funding sources.

9. Reduce the visual dominance of the U.S. 50 highway corridor through Meyers.

Policy: Request Caltrans to make available for sale or other means of transfer, excess right-of-way along U.S. 50 to adjacent property owners.

Policy: Develop a center lane landscaped median along U.S. 50 through the community plan area which provides access and visibility to adjoining land uses, and permits turn movements at cross street intersections.

C. COMMUNITY PLAN TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION IMPROVEMENTS

The following improvements are necessary to implement the policies listed above. The improvements generally reflect or refine items listed in Volume III of the RTP/AQP. They are shown in Figure 3-1. Additional discussion of improvements, estimated costs and methods of implementation is located in Chapter 7, Implementation.

Streets and Highways

1. Consolidate Existing Driveways Along U.S. 50. Reduce and/or consolidate existing access points along U.S. 50 consistent with the access policy listed above under Objective #7. The policy establishes criteria to determine which driveways will be affected. Targeted areas of highest priority for consolidation are indicated on Figure 3-1. Construction of the Pat Lowe Memorial Bike Trail and individual projects will be the primary means of implementation.
2. Develop and Implement a Chain Control Operations Plan. In consultation with Caltrans and the Highway Patrol, prepare an action plan which improves chain control procedures along U.S. 50. The plan may include operational changes as well as site improvements to facilitate chain-up while maintaining traffic flow and turning movements. Figure 3-1 identifies the plan's preferred location for a designated chain-up area located west of the U.S. 50/California 89 intersection.
3. [§]Develop and Implement U.S. 50/California 89 Intersection Improvements. Caltrans and El Dorado County should cooperatively study the opportunities for intersection improvements to maintain or improve the level of service consistent with the level of service policy listed above under Objective #2. Possible improvements could include a traffic circle or traffic signal. Improvements should be installed when warranted.
4. Construct a Center Landscaped Median Along U.S. 50. In consultation with Caltrans, develop and construct an intermittent landscaped median in the existing, continuous two-way left turn lane of U.S. 50. The median will reduce the apparent width of the highway and reduce overall traffic speeds thereby improving vehicle and pedestrian safety. Vehicle turning pockets and associated stacking space are to be included as part of the project to serve cross street intersections and major driveways. The median should be planted with low maintenance native or adapted shrubs and ground cover. The plant palette should be selected in part to provide for necessary vehicle sight distances and visibility of roadside businesses. Snow storage and drainage facilities will be included to prevent roadway icing during winter. The project should include pedestrian crossings in certain locations to improve pedestrian safety. See Figure 4-2, Community Design Plan, for approximate median locations.

Transit Service

1. Expand El Dorado County Transit Service. Fixed route transit service should be provided to each land use district including the community park and ride

[§] Amended 12/20/95

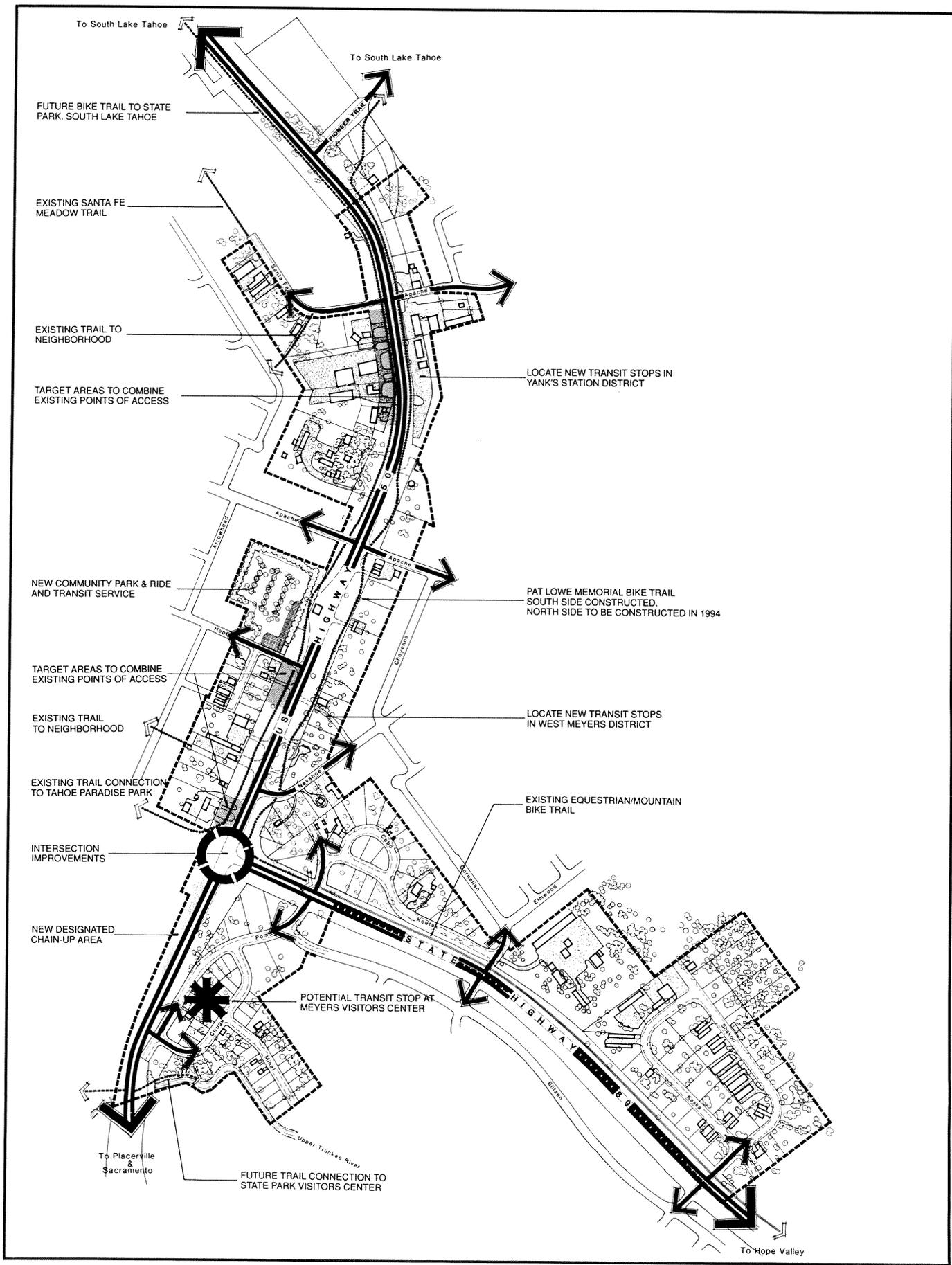
facility, and the City of South Lake Tahoe/Stateline. On demand service to the outlying residential and recreational uses should connect to the community plan area, preferably at the park and ride facility. Construct transit shelters at each transit stop throughout the plan area, including the park and ride facility.

Parking Facilities

1. Develop the Meyers Community Park and Ride. Develop a community park and ride facility within the plan area. The preferred site is the State of California parcels adjacent to the Agricultural Inspection Station. The facility's program of uses includes park and ride lot, transit and recreation shuttle stop, chain-up and rest area. Based on land coverage limitations and other site design factors, it is estimated to accommodate up to 150 vehicles. It can be designed to prohibit vehicles avoiding the nearby Agricultural Inspection Station by accessing off Hopi Street. If the preferred site is developed, the Department of Agriculture may decide to transfer control of the site to another agency such as the California Tahoe Conservancy.

θ Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities

1. Complete the Pat Lowe Memorial Bike Trail. Complete the trail as planned on both sides of U.S. 50. Although located outside the plan area, the plan recommends extending the Pat Lowe Trail along U.S. 50 toward the Lake Valley State Recreation Area (Lake Tahoe Country Club) and South Lake Tahoe.
2. Develop Recreation Access Trailheads. Construct recreational trail heads as part of developing the Meyers Visitors Center and Washoe Meadows State Park. The trailheads would access public lands near the Upper Truckee River bridge.



Meyers Community Plan TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

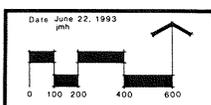


Figure 3-1. Transportation and Circulation

