STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Capital Outlay Budget Change Proposal (COBCP) - Cover Sheet
DF-151 (REV 07/21)

Fiscal Year	Business Unit	Department	Priority No.
2026/27	3125	California Tahoe Conservancy	005

Budget Request Name	Capital Outlay Program ID	Capital Outlay Project ID
3125-014-COBCP-2026-GB	2345	00012976

Project Title
Van Sickle Bi-State Park Safety and Equitable Access Improvements

Project Status and Type
Status: ☐ New ☒ Continuing Type: ☒Major ☐ Minor

Project Category *(Select one)*

☐CRI *(Critical Infrastructure)*	☐WSD *(Workload Space Deficiencies)*	☐ECP *(Enrollment Caseload Population)*	☐SM *(Seismic)*
☐FLS *(Fire Life Safety)*	☐FM *(Facility Modernization)*	☐PAR *(Public Access Recreation)*	☐RC *(Resource Conservation)*

Total Request (in thousands)	Phase(s) to be Funded	Total Project Cost (in thousands)
$ 1,000	WORKING DRAWINGS	$ 5,300

Budget Request Summary

The California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy) requests $1 million Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Fund (Proposition 4) for the working drawings phase for the Van Sickle Bi-State Park (Park) Safety and Equitable Access Improvements Project (Project).

Requires Legislation	Code Section(s) to be Added/Amended/Repealed	CCCI
☐ Yes ☒ No		

Requires Provisional Language	Budget Package Status
☐ Yes ☒ No	☐ Needed ☒ Not Needed ☐ Existing

Impact on Support Budget

One-Time Costs	☐ Yes	☒ No	Swing Space Needed	☐ Yes	☒ No
Future Savings	☐ Yes	☒ No	Generate Surplus Property	☐ Yes	☒ No
Future Costs	☒ Yes	☐ No			

If proposal affects another department, does other department concur with proposal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Attach comments of affected department, signed and dated by the department director or designee.

Prepared By	Date	Reviewed By	Date
Department Director	**Date**	**Agency Secretary**	**Date**

Department of Finance Use Only

Principal Program Budget Analyst	Date submitted to the Legislature
Michael McGinness	**1/9/2026**

A. COBCP Abstract:

The Conservancy requests $1 million in Proposition 4 for the working drawings phase for the Van Sickle Bi-State Park Safety and Equitable Access Improvements Project. The Project is a coordinated effort with the State of Nevada to enhance public safety and accessibility, improve the visitor experience, expand bicycle and pedestrian access to the Park, reduce carbon emissions, connect the Park to nearby disadvantaged communities, protect the environment, and allow for year-round operations. The Project includes approximately 0.75 miles of paved, ADA compliant, multi-use trail and associated amenities connecting the Park entrance, day-use areas, new state line monument and plaza, and a disadvantaged community in the City of South Lake Tahoe. In addition, the Project includes stormwater and snow storage improvements at the California day-use area to allow year-round Park operations and water quality protection. Combined, Project improvements will reduce carbon emissions, improve water quality, and improve visitor safety and accessibility. Funding will be used to complete the Working Drawings phase of the Project.

The total Project cost is estimated at $5.3 million. That includes $647,000 for preliminary plans, $1 million for working drawings to be completed in 2027, and $3,653,000 for construction, which is expected to begin in 2029.

B. Purpose of the Project:

The Park represents a long-held vision and partnership between the states of California and Nevada to provide a regionally significant recreational opportunity at Lake Tahoe. Through a memorandum of understanding, the Nevada Division of State Parks (NDSP) and the Conservancy partnered to design and construct Park amenities between 2002 and 2010, with the official opening in summer 2011. Both entities work cooperatively to manage the Park.

The Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) attracts a significant number of visitors annually. According to the Lake Tahoe Destination Stewardship Plan, approximately 2 million visitors spent nearly 13 million visitor days in the Basin. The Park is unique in its location as it is just a few minutes' walk from surrounding disadvantaged communities. In addition, the Park is adjacent to the largest 'tourism bed base' in the Basin and within the Basin's largest urban area. This strategic location immediately transitions from the dense urban context to a forest setting and provides opportunities for short day use outings, longer hikes, extraordinary views of Lake Tahoe, and enjoyment of a historic barn and cabins, which showcases part of the region's cultural heritage.

The Project will improve public safety, equitable access, neighborhood access to the Park, shared-use path connections through the Park, and expand stormwater and snow storage capacity to provide year-round vehicle access on the California side of the Park. Currently, pedestrians enter the Park by either walking on the entrance road alongside vehicles or by using a dirt trail adjacent to the road. The entrance road and dirt trail lead to the California day-use area where there are restrooms, a historic barn, and a picnic area. Pedestrians then typically travel between the California and Nevada day-use areas, a distance of approximately 0.3 miles, by walking within the roadway, and often stop in the middle of the road to take photos at the state line marker embedded within the road. To mitigate the user safety concerns and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, improve equitable access, reduce carbon emissions, and provide year-round vehicle access, the following Project improvements will be implemented on the California side of the Park:

- Establish an ADA-compliant multi-use paved trail connecting the Park entrance, California day-use area, Nevada day-use area, and nearby disadvantaged

neighborhood at Chonokis Road in South Lake Tahoe so that visitors can safely travel to all developed areas of the Park without needing to walk or roll on the road.
- Conservancy and DGS staff will design the multi-use paved trail to improve storm water run-off treatment, meet ADA accessibility standards, and accommodate snow removal so that the trail can be used year-round.
- Create a new state line monument and plaza along the ADA-compliant multi-use paved trail away from the road to minimize safety concerns.
- Pave the California day-use area dirt parking lot and incorporate appropriate Best Management Practices to improve water quality by capturing polluted runoff from the pavement and snow removal.
- Install interpretive signage in Spanish and Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California language for inclusivity, and other elements highlighting Washoe Tribal culture and stewardship, environmental stewardship ethics, and natural resource information.
- Install benches and picnic areas along the multi-use path and at the California day-use area to improve the visitor experience and accommodate people with mobility challenges.

The NDSP is planning several additional improvements on the Nevada side of the Park, which are expected to increase overall Park visitation. Since all visitors – including those visiting the Nevada side – must enter the Park via the main Park entrance at Lake Parkway or on the planned shared-use path from Chonokis Road, visitation is expected to increase on the Conservancy-owned California side. As a result, Project improvements are essential to protect public safety throughout the Park as visitation increases.

The Conservancy completed the study phase in Spring 2025 and is now beginning the preliminary plans phase. Activities during the preliminary plans phase included redesigning the concept plans for the shared-use trail near the entrance road so that it can be located on a parcel recently acquired by the Conservancy adjacent to the Park entry road, completing environmental analysis, completing due diligence, conducting public outreach, and securing Public Works Board approval. The preliminary plans phase will also include designing approximately 0.3 miles of paved shared-use trail connecting the Park to Chonokis Drive. This connection will provide direct Park access to residents living in a disadvantaged neighborhood within South Lake Tahoe and provide a safe connection to the Park for pedestrians traveling from elsewhere in South Lake Tahoe.

A three-page total cost estimate was completed in June 2023 and will be updated in late 2025 or early 2026. The original total Project cost estimate was $3,795,000; however, due to the construction costs related to the trail re-route and connection to Chonokis Drive described above, staff estimate that the total cost will be approximately $5.3 million. Of this amount, the Conservancy has already secured $400,000 for the study and preliminary plans phases. Through this COBCP, the Conservancy is seeking funding to complete the working drawings phase during 2026/27 fiscal year.

The NDSP plans to begin its project in 2026, with completion expected in 2027. The Conservancy's Project is currently one to three years behind the NDSP's timeline. Securing funding through this COBCP will help ensure that the Conservancy's Project is completed only a few years after NDSPs, allowing the public to safely access the entire Park once both projects are finished.

The following is a breakdown of past and future Park improvements with estimated funding costs between California and Nevada. All improvements are coordinated jointly with CA and NV.

CA/NV Joint Project Elements	**NV Contribution**	**CA Contribution**
Park Land Acquisition – 2001	Donation	$3.821 million
Park Design and Construction 2002-2010	$850k design, $2.8 million construction	$165k construction
Barn Stabilization – 2007	-	$160k construction
Vision Plan – 2019	$75k planning	-
Barn Lead Paint Remediation -2022	-	$534k construction
NV Visitor Center, Residence Area, and Admin. offices	$16.68 million estimated for engineering and construction	-
CA and NV Public Safety and Equitable Access Improvements (includes the Project and NDSP's portion of the shared-use path)	$2 million estimated for engineering and construction	$5.3 million estimated design and construction.
Total	$22,405,000	$9,980,000

C. Relationship to the Strategic Plan: (relevance of problem/need to mission and goals)

The Conservancy was established in 1984 for the purposes of protecting and restoring Lake Tahoe's natural environment, including water quality, air quality, and wildlife habitat; acquiring, restoring, and managing lands; preserving the scenic beauty and recreational opportunities of the region; and providing public access.

Implementation of the Project aligns with the Conservancy's 2024-2029 Strategic Plan goal of providing recreational opportunities and access for all. This goal emphasizes developing multiple-benefit recreation projects that expand equitable access, protect the environment, and create resilience to climate change. It also includes strengthening partnerships to support access for all and regional priorities. The Project supports this goal by constructing an ADA-accessible route, allowing individuals with mobility challenges to safely and easily experience the Park. Additionally, the Conservancy is working closely with the NDSP to coordinate planning efforts, leveraging a unique partnership across state lines.

The Project supports the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) Outdoors for All initiative, which aims to equitably expand outdoor access by investing in parks, open space, and natural areas. The Conservancy will construct access-oriented infrastructure including ADA compliant paved walking paths, bike trails, and parking areas, while also providing year-round vehicle access to the Park.

D. Alternatives:

Alternative 1. Planning and Installation of Major Capital Outlay Projects
This alternative will complete the working drawings phase for recreation and public safety improvements to the Park in coordination with the NDSP.

Alternative 2. No Project/No Action
Under this alternative, funding would not be provided to complete the working drawings phase on the California side of the Park. A failure to fund and implement the Project under a no project alternative will limit improvements on the California and Nevada sides of the Park. The no project alternative will continue safety concerns and user conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at the Park and limit equitable access for Park users.

In addition to the safety risks, the State of Nevada would be unable to complete its planned improvements - such as the shared use trail connecting day use areas and the stateline monument. As a result, investments already made in planning and partial implementation would not reach their full potential if California does not follow through on its portion of the project.

E. Recommended Solution:

1. Which alternative and why?

   The recommended alternative is funding the Working Drawing phase for the Project (Alternative 1).

   A no project alternative will limit improvements on the California and Nevada sides of the Park. The no project alternative will continue safety concerns and user conflict between vehicles and pedestrians at the Park and limit equitable access for Park users. Many of the Park improvements planned on the Nevada side require improvements originating on the California side of the Park. For example, the paved trail connecting the two day-use areas starts in California, and implementation of year-round vehicle access requires improvements on the California side. In addition, Nevada has over $18 million in Park improvements planned over the next several years with currently only $5,300,000 estimated from the State of California.

2. Detailed scope description.

   The Scope of the Project is:

   - Constructing approximately 0.75 miles of paved shared-use trail within Van Sickle Bi-State Park;
   - Constructing and improving day-use areas along the shared-use trail. Day use areas will include features such as covered and uncovered picnic tables, bicycle racks, interpretive signage and exhibits, wayfinding signage, drinking faucets, and bicycle repair stations;
   - Constructing storm water basins to capture runoff and accommodate snow removal;
   - Paving the existing parking lot at the California day use area;
   - Improving natural-surface trails between the Park entrance and California day use area;
   - Repairing existing restrooms to meet ADA code standards;
   - Constructing rest areas along the shared-use trail which may include benches and bicycle racks.

3. Basis for cost information.

   As described in Section B above, DGS produced a three-page estimate for this Project in June 2023 and estimated the total project cost at $3,795,000. Since then, two changes to the Project have occurred. First, in August 2025, the Conservancy acquired a property near the Park entrance. Conservancy ownership of this property allows the possibility of

meeting ADA-compliant grades for the shared-use trail from the Park entrance to the California day use area by meandering the trail across a bigger area than originally planned. Second, staff identified an opportunity to connect the Park to a nearby disadvantaged neighborhood by adding only 0.3 miles of shared-use trail to this Project. This connection between the Park and Chonokis Drive will provide a second Park entrance for anyone walking, bicycling, or rolling from the Stateline neighborhood and beyond. As a result, staff estimate that the total Project cost will increase by $1.5 million, bringing the total Project cost to approximately $5.3 million. DGS will complete a new cost estimate reflecting these Project changes and current construction costs in early 2026.

4. Factors/benefits for recommended solution other than the least expensive alternative.

   The least expensive alternative is the no project alternative. For the reasons described in Part D above, the no project alternative would not improve public safety and public access at Van Sickle Bi-State Park.

5. Complete description of impact on support budget.

   The Conservancy partners with Nevada State Parks to maintain Van Sickle. Any impact to the support budget will be a cost that is shared between the two states. At this time, it is not expected that any cost will increase past current maintenance level. However, in the event costs do increase, a plan will be developed with Nevada State Parks to mitigate increased costs to the State.

6. Identify and explain any project risks.

   The primary Project risk is unexpected construction cost increases due to factors outside of the Conservancy's control.

7. List requested interdepartmental coordination and/or special project approval (including mandatory reviews and approvals, e.g. technology proposals).

   None.

F. Consistency with Government Code Section 65041.1:

Does the recommended solution (project) promote infill development by rehabilitating existing infrastructure and how? Explain.

The Project will improve an existing recreational facility and extend the life of existing improvements.

Does the project improve the protection of environmental and agricultural resources by protecting and preserving the state's most valuable natural resources? Explain.

The Project will contribute to the protection of the environment. The site improvements will direct appropriate public access and recreation to Conservancy lands best suited for the recreational activities. Installing storm water basins helps prevent polluted runoff from flowing into Lake Tahoe.

Does the project encourage efficient development patterns by ensuring that infrastructure associated with development, other than infill, support efficient use of land and is appropriately planned for growth? Explain.

Conservancy staff plan all capital outlay projects to address critical natural resource protection and accommodate a growing population of users.