



Lake Valley Fire Protection District

TOT Funding Summary

The following information provides an updated summary of tourism impacts to Lake Valley Fire Protection District (LVFPD) and the request by LVFPD for TOT revenue allocations for four (4) funding priorities to offset these impacts. Tourism impacts are divided into “General” impacts, related to general information on tourism in the South Shore, and “COVID-19” impacts, related to how the pandemic changed tourist behavior in the South Shore.

General Tourism 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 2035.¹
- 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.²
- The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) estimates over 1.8 million visitors annually travel through the Emerald Bay, Highway 89 corridor of LVFPD.³ Extreme traffic congestion resulting in hours long delays is not uncommon in the winter or summer peaks.
- There are approximately 13,979 permanent residents within the District⁴ as of the 2020 Census with 13,367 parcels in LVFPD boundaries that provide the main source of funding for the District through property tax and special assessment revenue.

¹ 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>

² 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

³ 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>.

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171).

https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Counts,%20Estimates,%20and%20Projections%3APopulation%20Total&g=0500000US06017%241400000_1400000US06017030402,06017030502,06017030504,06017030506,06017030507,06017032002,06017990000.

- As of March 2022, approximately 582 active Vacation Home Rentals (VHRs) permits were located within the District boundary with a total of 937 active permits Countywide.^{5,6} This equates to **62%** of active VHRs in the County located in the LVFPD area alone. In addition, there are 78 pending VHR permits within LVFPD's boundary.
- LVFPD has experienced an increase of 22% in calls for service from 2019 to 2021.⁷ Of the 1,498 calls for service in 2021, 385 of those calls, or approximately **26%** were to VHRs. Just over one quarter of all calls for LVFPD were to just the 582 VHRs in the District.
- There are approximately 7,300 single family homes in the District. VHRs make up just under 8% of all single-family homes, but they accounted for over a quarter of calls for 2021. District residents are subsidizing the large amount of calls to VHRs.⁸
- The District conducted 15% more VHR inspections in 2021 than the previous year (384 inspections in 2020 and 441 inspections in 2021). VHRs are inspected by LVFPD staff when new licenses are approved and bi-annually for existing licenses.⁹ The District added 42 more vacation home rentals between 2020 and 2021.¹⁰
- Overnight visitors include campgrounds at Fallen Leaf Lake and Camp Richardson Resort, as well as the Camp Richardson Hotel. The District boundaries include areas such as Pope 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 Valley.
- Costs for the District to respond to visitor specific emergency services, vehicle accidents and extended calls totaled \$295,475.17 in 2021. These 180 visitor calls and the subsequent costs associated are a direct burden to District taxpayers.¹¹
- LVFPD lost 265 homes to the Caldor Fire in 2021. This includes full-time private residences and United States Forest Service (USFS) summer use cabins. Direct costs from the Caldor Fire to the District are currently estimated at \$600,000 based on costs incurred from responding to the fire. This does not include the structure losses which will reduce the property tax revenue the District receives until re-development can occur.¹²

⁵ County of El Dorado. March 2021. Vacation Home Rentals (VHR) Map. Available online: <https://see-eldorado.edcgov.us/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e80cdb0a711644e3b5e663a10a4d8f2e>

⁶ Emma Kikuyama, personal communication, March 2021. Spreadsheet of active VHRs in Lake Valley FPD Boundary.

⁷ LVFPD Staff, personal communication, March 2021.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ County of El Dorado. March 2021. Vacation Home Rentals (VHR) Map. Available online: <https://see-eldorado.edcgov.us/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e80cdb0a711644e3b5e663a10a4d8f2e>

¹¹ LVFPD Staff, personal communication, March 2021.

¹² County of El Dorado. March 2021. Vacation Home Rentals (VHR) Map. Available online: <https://see-eldorado.edcgov.us/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=e80cdb0a711644e3b5e663a10a4d8f2e>



- 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.¹³
- Lack of El Dorado County Road Maintenance staff has affected the District. During the December 2021 record snow event, the County had no night crew staffing. This left the District with no help and needing to either hike in to homes or the crews attempted to make a path through the road with engines. The engine was stuck several times due to narrow, one lane roads, with traffic or unplowed roads. The District was able to reach those in need, but the response was delayed. The District needs to purchase a loader to help plow the roads and gain access to fire hydrants.¹⁴ The images below depict the District's Type 3 Engine managing the December 2021 snow.



- During the December 2021 record snow event, Barton Hospital requested that LVFPD transport Barton Hospital nurses and doctors from their homes to the hospital. This has happened in the past during periods of high traffic (gridlock) or heavy snow.¹⁵

COVID-19 Impacts on Tourism

- Not much data is currently available that shows how COVID-19 has impacted tourism in the South Shore area. The South Shore area includes the City of South Lake Tahoe, LVFPD, and Fallen Leaf Lake Community Service District areas. Both the Fire Chief for LVFPD and the Fire Chief for the City of South Lake Tahoe believe that the number of tourists has substantially increased over the last two years, and that the area no longer experiences a "shoulder season."

¹³ LVFPD Staff, personal communication, March 2021.

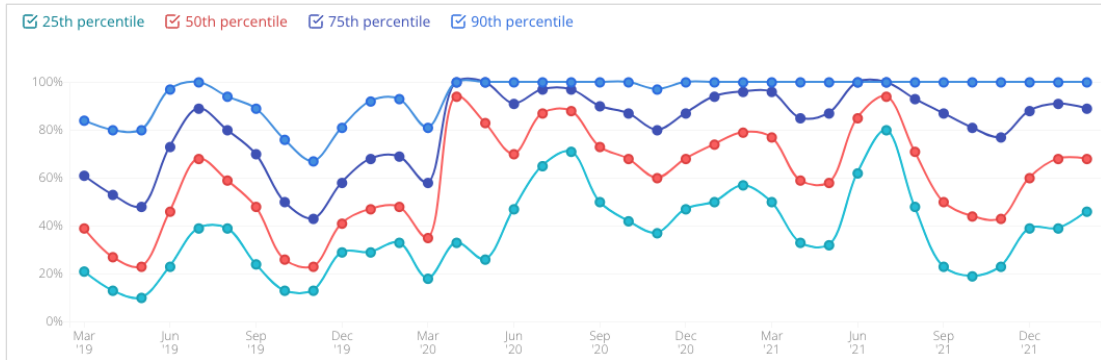
¹⁴ The District has successfully received funding through FEMA to purchase the loader and are waiting for administrative approval.

¹⁵ Ibid.



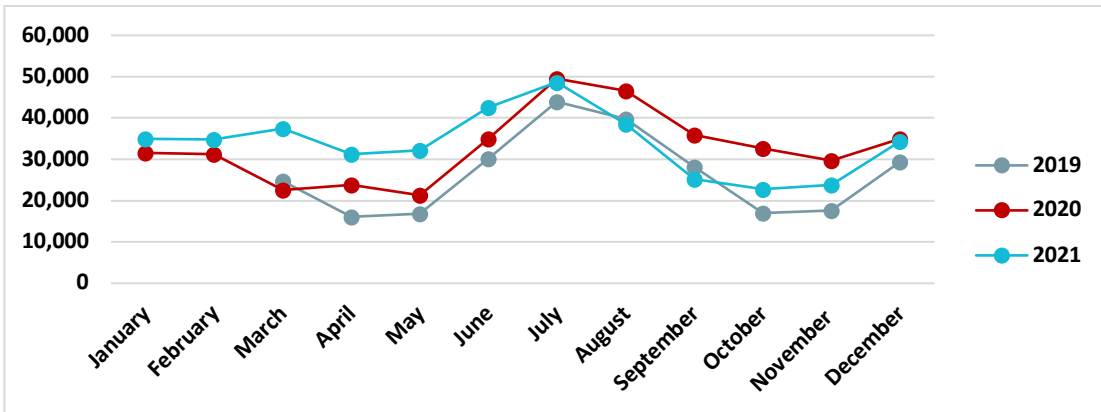
- Occupancy rates for vacation home rentals in the South Shore have increased substantially since the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic. According to AirDNA¹⁶, the VHRs that performed greater than 75% of VHRs in the South Shore were almost all fully booked in the summer of 2020 when compared to 2019. The lowest performing 25% of VHRs still had their bookings double in the summer months in 2020 when compared to 2019 as shown in Figure 1 below.¹⁷

Figure 1: Historical Occupancy Rates (Entire Home, 1-4 bedrooms, Accommodates 1-10 guests)



- Total nights booked for all VHRs in the South Shore area increased by 26% from 2019 to 2020 and by another 2% in 2021. Total nights booked also substantially increased during what would normally be considered “shoulder season” for the South Shore since the pandemic began. For example, total nights booked during April of 2021 **increased 94%** when compared to 2019. Figure 2 below shows total nights booked by month from 2019 to 2021.¹⁸

Figure 2: Total Nights Booked (2019-2021)



¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ AirDNA Marketminder. Available online at <https://www.airdna.co/vacation-rental-data/app/us/california/south-lake-tahoe/96150/occupancy>.

¹⁸ Ibid.



- AirDNA data shows that the South Shore area, including LVFPD has experienced a significant increase in the number of nights booked for VHRs since the COVID-19 pandemic began. There was a 26% increase in total night stays between 2019 and 2020. This drastic increase in visitors to VHRs alone highlights the need for proactive education of visitors regarding fire safety.



Funding Priorities

In order to equip the District to better address tourism impacts as described above, LVFPD proposes the following three (3) funding priorities using TOT revenue: Priority 1 – 2021 Direct Visitor Costs, Priority 2 – Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction Staff Positions, and Priority 3 – Apparatus Needs. In addition, the District is asking for the Board to consider Priority 4 – Insurance Increases due to the Caldor Fire. This fourth priority is not tourism specific, however it speaks to additional financial burdens facing the District because of the Caldor Fire, such as high increases in insurance for fire stations that the District is anticipating to occur over the long term.

Each priority includes a short description, summary statement, and a funding breakdown provided on the following pages. The table provided below shows summary information for the four priorities. LVFPD hopes the Board of Supervisors will fund the first three priorities and consider funding Priority 4.

Priority Number	Priority Type	Timeline	Total Amount Requested
1	2021 Direct Visitor Costs	One-time each FY	\$295,475.17
2	Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction Staffing Positions	One-time*	\$296,825.00
3	Apparatus Needs	One-time	\$730,000.00
4	Insurance Increase	One-time	\$24,153.00

* The District respectfully requests that the Board commit to at least a two-year contract obligation for this staffing request if the Board chooses to fund this priority with TOT revenue.



Priority 1 – 2021 Direct Visitor Costs

In 2021, the District identified 180 calls where personnel responded to visitors in need of emergency medical or fire protection services. These calls totaled \$295,475.71 with the cost burden placed directly on District taxpayers. LVFPD utilizes 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. This places an unnecessary burden on District taxpayers who provide the main source of revenue for the District.

The funding breakdown 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 2021 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

Priority 1 would be one-time TOT funding of \$295,475.71 to cover costs associated with visitor specific calls in 2021.

Call Type	Equipment/ Staff	Number of hours	Number of Visitor Calls in 2020	Total Costs
Emergency Medical	Single Engine/Single Medic	2 hours	94	\$59,266.40
Vehicle Accident	2 Engines and Chief Officer	2.5 hours	52	\$99,970.25
Extended Call	3 Engines and Chief Officer	4 hours	34	\$136,238.51
Total Costs				\$295,475.17

Funding Breakdown

One EMS Call – Single Engine / Single Medic (2 hours total)		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (2 hr)
Captain	\$47.93	\$95.86
Engineer	\$43.25	\$86.50
Firefighter-PM	\$42.27	\$84.54
Total Personnel Cost:		\$266.90
Engine Hourly Rate	\$140.00	\$280.00
Personnel & Equip		\$546.90
Admin Rate	15.29%	\$83.59
Total Reimbursement:		\$630.49
94 Visitor Calls for 2021		\$59,266.40



One Vehicle Accident - Two Engines & Chief Officer - 2.5 hours		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (2.5 hr)
Captain	\$47.93	\$119.83
Engineer	\$43.25	\$108.13
Firefighter-PM	\$42.27	\$105.68
Personnel cost per eng.		\$333.63
2 Engines companies		\$667.25
Hourly Rate Total (2.5 hrs)		
Chief Officer	\$83.76	\$209.40
Engine Hourly Rate	\$140.00	\$350.00
2 Engines @ 2.5 hours		\$700.00
Personnel & Equip		\$1,576.65
Admin Rate	15.29%	\$240.99
Total Reimbursement:		\$1,817.64
52 Visitor Calls for 2021		\$99,970.25

One Extended Call - Three engines & Chief Officer - 4 hours		
Engine Company	Hourly Rate	Total (4 hrs)
Captain	\$47.93	\$191.72
Engineer	\$43.25	\$173.00
Firefighter-PM	\$42.27	\$169.08
Personnel cost per eng.		\$533.80
3 Engine Companies		\$1,601.40
Hourly Rate Total (4 hrs)		
Chief Officer	\$83.76	\$335.04
Engine Hourly Rate	\$120.00	\$480.00
3 Engines @ 4 hours		\$1,440.00
Personnel & Equip		\$3,376.44
Admin Rate	15.29%	\$516.09
Total Reimbursement:		\$3,892.53
34 Visitor Calls for 2021		\$136,238.51



Priority 2 – Fire Prevention and Community Risk Reduction Positions

With the recent wildland fires throughout the state of California and the Caldor Fire passing through large areas of LVFPD, prevention has proven to be a necessity in keeping fire from spreading through neighborhoods and destroying communities. The 600 homes in the Christmas Valley area that survived the Caldor Fire are a prime example of proper fire prevention measures being in place, allowing suppression crews to be successful in suppressing the fire. The prevention measures that saved Christmas Valley were a joint effort between LVFPD, Liberty Utility, the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team, and private property owners over years of continuing education and support.

Currently, there is no funding for dedicated fire prevention and community risk reduction positions in the District. Without dedicated positions for fire prevention and community outreach, LVFPD engine crew staff must conduct all inspections for the District. These include various inspection such as defensible space inspections, insurance inspections, and tree marking. This means that crews may not be able to conduct inspections when scheduled due to being called for emergencies. This also means that longer term planning, such as assisting neighborhoods with becoming FireWise^{®19} are more difficult and less likely to occur with no dedicated positions available.

In the past, the District had a chipping and defensible space program, which educated homeowners on proper home hardening and preparation for potential wildfires. A free chipping program also allowed homeowners to remove numerous tons of forest litter. Additionally, a wood shake roof replacement program was run through the Prevention Division to remove and replace most of the wood shake roofs remaining in the District. Due to lack of funding, these programs have been discontinued in the District and are currently contracted out to neighboring agencies. Though these programs are no longer available, LVFPD continues to have a collaborative relationship with the Tahoe Resource Conservation District and has aided in assisting several neighborhoods in the District in becoming Firewise[®] neighborhoods. Becoming a FireWise neighborhood has helped residents keep their homeowner's insurance and has also lowered the costs of that insurance.

With the ever-changing economy and lack of funding sources for the District, being able to fund prevention efforts continues to be a challenge. With the loss of LVFPD's 20 person fuels crew in 2015, the District has only been able to fund a Fire Marshal and a part-time tech position to work on prevention measures. LVFPD has relied on on-duty engine crews to assist in prevention work including all types and kinds of inspections within the District, such as vacation home rental inspections. There are currently 582 vacation home rentals within the LVFPD boundary. With the requested funding to hire a Fire Prevention Captain and Prevention Technician position, Lake Valley FPD will be able to better educate residents and visitors alike.

¹⁹ A FireWise USA Community is a nationally recognized certification of a community that has taken appropriate measures to become more resistant to wildfire. Any community that meets a set of voluntary criteria on an annual basis and retains an "In Good Standing Status" may identify itself as being a Firewise[®] Site. The Firewise USA[®] program is administered by NFPA[®] and is co-sponsored by the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. There are 6 Fire Adapted Communities in LVFPD according to <https://www.tahoelivingwithfire.com/join-your-fire-adapted-community/>.



In 2021, the District responded to numerous calls from visitors. These calls included vacation home renters, campsite visitors, day use visitors and other tourists traveling in the area. The District spans over 82 miles and includes Emerald Bay, Camp Richardson, Pope Beach, Sierra-at-Tahoe Ski Resort and Heavenly Ski Resort. Additionally, LVFPD crews also respond to the Kirkwood Ski Area when requested. Over 100,000 visitors travel along Hwy 50 and the SR 89 corridor every day during peak seasons. Trying to educate these visitors on the dangers of wildfire and other prevention measures can be a daunting task. Through the funding of the Fire Prevention Captain and a Technician position, outreach to visitors and residents will increase tenfold. The opportunity for grant funding will also increase and LVFPD will be better able to focus on areas that need attention. This attention can come in the form of education, defensible space inspections, helping neighborhoods become Firewise® certified, fuels reduction or other prevention measures. A summary of information related to preventative measure that the District has published can be found in Appendix B.

Summary

Priority 2 would fund two (2) prevention positions, a Fire Prevention Captain position and a Prevention Technician position as outlined above at a total cost of \$296,825.00. In order to manage staffing and effectively plan future budgets, the District respectfully requests that the Board commit to at least a two-year contract obligation for this staffing request if the Board chooses to fund this priority with TOT revenue. District staff propose to provide the Board with a presentation and report of the success of the fire prevention activities for the years the positions are funded.

Funding Breakdown

Funding positions	
Fire Prevention Captain	\$222,250.00
Prevention Technician	\$74,575.00
Total Cost:	\$296,825.00

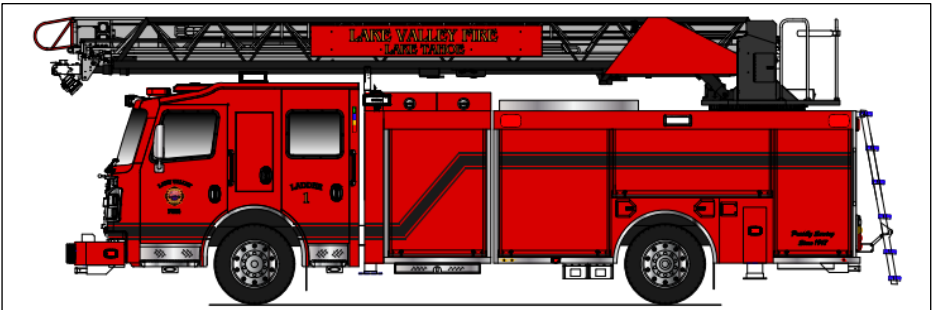


Priority 3 – Apparatus Needs

The District was able to use \$400,000 in Development Impact Fees for the down payment of a Quint apparatus in FY 2020. Development Impact Fees are collected by the County on the District’s behalf based on the amount of development that occurs within the District’s boundary. The total cost for the apparatus was approximately \$1.13 million. The remaining balance owed on the Quint apparatus is \$730,000. The District is financing the remaining balance in order to be able to complete the purchase.

The Quint apparatus will take the place of one of LVFPD’s Type 1 Engines that is due for replacement. The growth in the District of VHRs has increased the number of homes constructed to be larger in size and scope than the standard 3-to-4 bedroom, 2-to-3-bathroom home. It is not uncommon for homes in LVFPD to be 5+ bedrooms with the same number of bathrooms, constructed to operate as VHRs, with some even including indoor swimming pools. These larger homes require different firefighting equipment than what is commonly used. For example, roof access for venting fires requires larger and longer apparatus to attack large second and third story homes via deck access. The current ladder compliment on a Type 1 Engine does not meet these needs. The Quint will allow LVFPD to respond to fires safely and confidently at these larger homes and also allow the use of an elevated water stream to attack the fire. This is critical to stopping large fires from spreading house to house or into surrounding vegetation. A mockup of the Quint that is on order for the District can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Quint Apparatus Mockup



Summary

Priority 3 would fund the remaining balance on the Quint apparatus at \$730,000.00. The District currently plans to fund this remaining balance through remaining development impact fees collected each year. If the Board of Supervisors were to provide the remaining balance through TOT revenue, the development impact fee funds would then be available for other needs, such necessary facility upgrades and improvements to be able to house the new Quint apparatus.

Funding Breakdown

Apparatus – Quint	
Quint Apparatus Cost	\$1,130,000.00
Development Impact Fees	(\$400,000.00)
Remainder:	\$730,000.00



Priority 4 – Insurance Increases due to the Caldor Fire

Costs for insurance have gone up, not just for homeowners and business owners in the region, but for the fire agencies as well. LVFPD is no exception. The District paid \$24,904.00 annually for insurance until the Caldor Fire. After the Caldor Fire, the District’s insurance almost doubled to \$49,057.00 annually. This represents a **97%** increase in the costs for insurance in one year. The insurance for the District covers all stations and apparatus. Helping the District fund the increase in insurance would free up revenues for the purchase of a loader to help plow the roads and gain access to fire hydrants.

Summary

The District requests that the Board consider allocating \$24,153.00 in TOT revenue collected in the Lake Valley Fire Protection District boundary to cover the increase in insurance costs due to the Caldor Fire.

Funding Breakdown

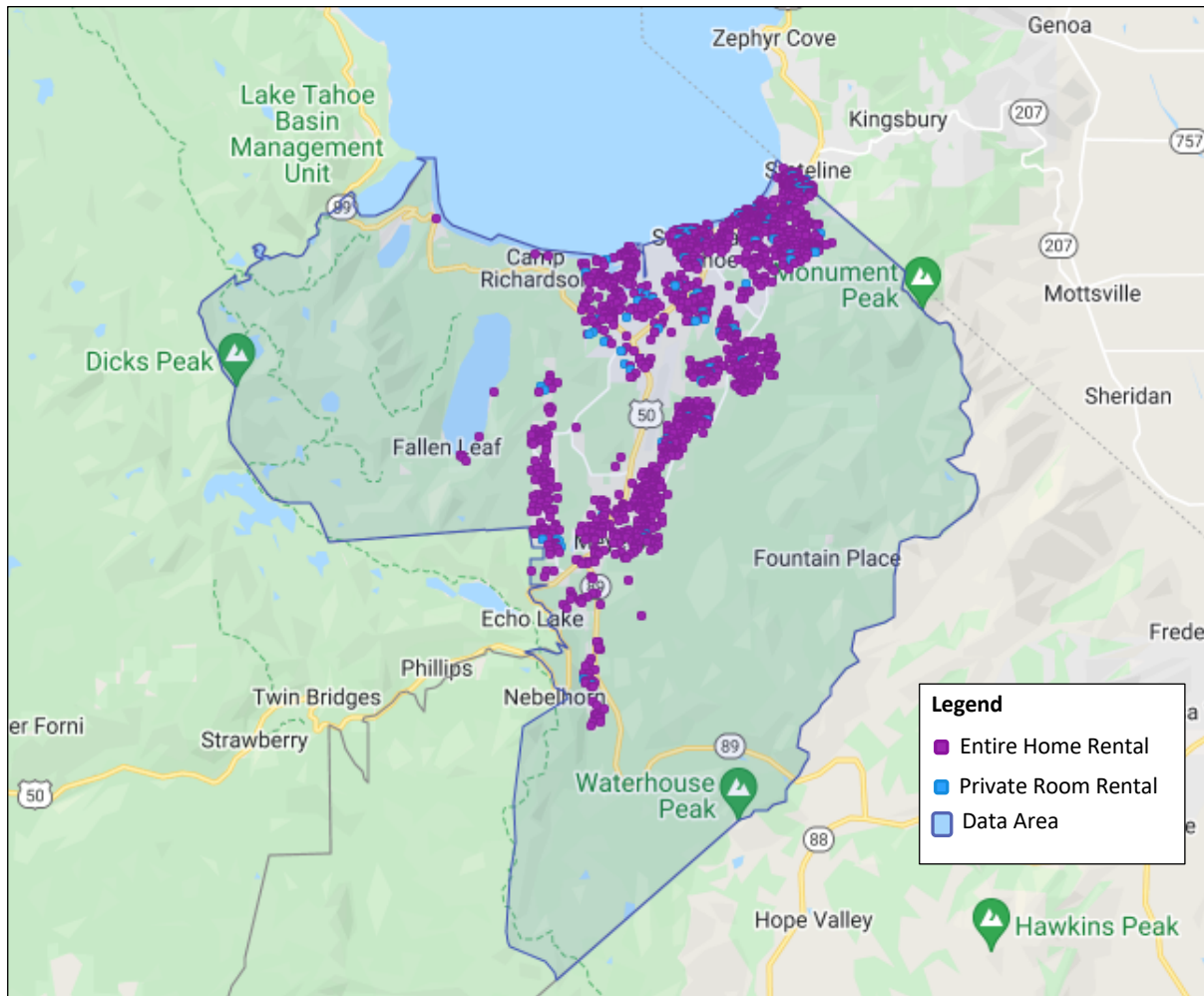
Insurance Costs	
Prior to Caldor Fire	\$24,904.00
After Caldor Fire	\$49,057.00
Difference:	\$24,153.00
Percent Change:	97%



Appendix A

AirDNA Data Area





Appendix B

Fire Prevention Information

