Northstar, Heavenly, And Kirkwood To Address Traffic And Parking Challenges Next Winter Season

Starting winter 2023/24, the resorts will create a combination of free and paid parking options on weekends and holidays/peak periods, with a focus on reservations and carpooling incentives, in an effort to alleviate road congestion and parking challenges.

LAKE TAHOE, Calif. – March 22, 2023 – Road congestion and parking challenges in the Lake Tahoe region have been, and remain, important issues within the broader community – especially with historic winter storms and snowfall this year. As a result, Northstar California, Heavenly Mountain Resort, and Kirkwood Mountain Resort are making changes to their parking plans for winter 2023/2024.

Each resort will create a combination of free and paid parking options on weekends and holidays/peak periods, with a focus on reservations and carpooling incentives, to alleviate road congestion and parking challenges.

“Addressing the traffic issues that impact our community is a key priority for the South Lake Tahoe City Council, but we can’t do it alone,” said Cody Bass, South Lake Tahoe City Councilmember and TTD and LTVA Board Member. “Heavenly’s paid reservations and carpooling based parking approach on peak days is an exciting announcement that will help alleviate road congestion in the community, while also promoting important initiatives, like carpooling and taking public transportation options.Taking a forward-looking, innovative approach to solving community-wide challenges is critical, and we appreciate Heavenly’s leadership in tackling these issues.

The new comprehensive parking plans incorporate learnings from the traffic patterns and current policies of each resort, plus harness best practices from across other mountain resorts and the ski industry. For instance, the company has found that carpool incentives reduce vehicle volumes even with similar resort visitation by encouraging more people per vehicle. At Park City Mountain, more than 60% of cars using paid/reservation lots during the 2022/23 season qualified for free parking thanks to carpooling incentives. Additionally, using parking reservations – which will take place at Heavenly and Northstar next season– has been shown to spread out arrival times and reduce congestion as cars roam for spots.

Specifics on each of the three resorts’ parking plans for next winter can be found on their websitesNorthstar, Heavenly, and Kirkwood.

Free parking will still be readily accessible at each resort on weekends and holidays/peak periods, in addition to weekdays.

“Ultimately, it is our goal to improve the experience for our guests, employees, and communities – it's why we are taking action ahead of next season,” said Tom Fortune, VP & COO of Heavenly and the Tahoe Region. “We are committed to providing our guests with plenty of options – free parking, preferred paid, reservations-based parking, and carpool incentives to reduce congestion and support the environment. We anticipate a real improvement to traffic and parking availability, and we are grateful for the support and collaboration from our community partners in both North and South Lake Tahoe.”

“We have worked closely with Heavenly Mountain Resort over the course of this season to address some of the most challenging weather and traffic days our community has experienced in recent memory,” said South Lake Tahoe City Manager, Joe Irvin. “The introduction of paid reservations and carpooling based parking on weekends and holidays by the resort is a clear solution that will help alleviate congestion and traffic flow through our community.”

“Heavenly Mountain Resort’s transition to a reservations-based paid parking model on its busiest days, while also leaning into carpooling incentives, will help get more cars off the road, ultimately reducing traffic and positively impacting the environment,” said Carol Chaplin, President & CEO of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority. “Taking an approach that has long-term sustainability in mind goes hand-in-hand with supporting our tourist economy. We look forward to a continued partnership with Heavenly as

we support a collaboration-first approach to stewardship here in South Lake Tahoe."

"Northstar's proposed traffic and parking management plan uses multiple demand management strategies to increase resort accessibility and reduce regional traffic congestion, while elevating the guest arrival experience," said Tony Karwowski, President & CEO of the North Tahoe Community Alliance. "Northstar's plan is a leading example of operationalizing destination stewardship strategies to reduce visitation impact when it is needed most, during peak periods. The thoughtful approach and use of reserved paid parking, off site park and ride, as well as public and private transportation systems will reduce congestion during the busiest days of the year."

"Parking management at Northstar will reduce traffic congestion along Northstar Drive by better distributing arriving motorists between the parking areas, and will also encourage greater use of shuttles and carpooling," said Gordon Shaw, Transportation Engineer – LSC Transportation Consultants. "Through this strategy, Northstar will be improving the overall guest experience while helping to reduce impacts on the community."

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