

5 OTHER CEQA-MANDATED SECTIONS

5.1 GROWTH INDUCEMENT

5.1.1 California Environmental Quality Act

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 21100(b)(5) specifies that the growth-inducing impacts of a project must be addressed in an environmental impact report (EIR). Section 15126.2(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines provides the following guidance for assessing growth-inducing impacts of a project:

Discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. Included in this are projects which would remove obstacles to population growth (a major expansion of a wastewater treatment plant might, for example, allow for more construction in service areas). Increases in the population may tax existing community service facilities, requiring construction of new facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Also, discuss the characteristics of some projects which may encourage and facilitate other activities that could significantly affect the environment, either individually or cumulatively. It must not be assumed that growth in any area is necessarily beneficial, detrimental, or of little significance to the environment.

A project can induce growth directly, indirectly, or both. Direct growth inducement would result if a project involved construction of new housing. Indirect growth inducement would result, for instance, if implementing a project resulted in any of the following:

- ▶ substantial new permanent employment opportunities (e.g., commercial, industrial, or governmental enterprises);
- ▶ substantial short-term employment opportunities (e.g., construction employment) that indirectly stimulates the need for additional housing and services to support the new temporary employment demand; and/or
- ▶ removal of an obstacle to additional growth and development, such as removing a constraint on a required public utility or service (e.g., construction of a major sewer line with excess capacity through an undeveloped area).

Growth inducement itself is not an environmental effect but may foreseeably lead to environmental effects. If substantial growth inducement occurs, it can result in secondary environmental effects, such as increased demand for housing, demand for other community and public services and infrastructure capacity, increased traffic and noise, degradation of air or water quality, degradation or loss of plant or animal habitats, conversion of agricultural and open-space land to urban uses, and other effects.

5.1.2 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

Section 3.7.2(H) of the TRPA Code of Ordinances requires evaluation of the growth-inducing impacts of a project. Growth can be induced by eliminating obstacles to growth or by stimulating economic activity in a way that encourages increases in population and housing in the region.

5.1.3 Growth-Inducing Effects of the Project

Implementation of the Project would replace and expand the Existing Lodge and would include associated improvements, such as a larger parking lot, that would reduce impacts on the surrounding neighborhood. The average daily visitation at the Schilling Lodge over the course of the year, aside from attendance at special events and gatherings, would increase incrementally with implementation of the proposed Project and Alternative A. The type and frequency of events at the Schilling Lodge would increase over existing conditions, but the number of attendees at the large special events would not be greater than those that occur under existing conditions. The Project would result in the need for two additional employees in the winter and up to five additional employees in the summer (see Table 2-4 in Chapter 2, "Description of the Proposed Project and Alternative Evaluated in Detail"). Among other things, the Project objectives are to expand recreational opportunities to improve resident and visitor experience, address operational deficiencies in the current facility and improve financial viability, and repurpose the historic Schilling Residence into a new lodge for community use and recreation activities. The Project would not extend infrastructure (e.g., utilities, roads) into an undeveloped area. Because the Project would redevelop the existing cross-country lodge; result in a small net increase in employees; and would not result in any permanent housing, population growth, or expansions of roads or infrastructure capacity, the Project would not be growth inducing.

The small increase in visitation to the Schilling Lodge would not create the need for tourist services in Tahoe City and the surrounding area. Similarly, the Project would not foster economic growth in the region such that an increase in supporting recreation and tourist services would be needed, such as recreation equipment, supplies, food, and related facilities.

Development in the Tahoe Region is guided by the Regional Plan, which allows new development and redevelopment through authorization of residential allocations, commercial floor area, tourist accommodation units, and residential bonus units. As a result, development is capped in the Region and implementation of recreation-related and projects, such as the Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project would not result in a direct or indirect increase in the planned development patterns in the Region. Although population growth in the state and region will continue to create an increased use and demand for recreational opportunities, increased use and demand will not have permanent, irreversible impacts in the region. The parcel exchange would not result in any change in land use policies or TCPUD and Conservancy policies; thus, there would be no growth inducement associated with changes to policies.

5.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Chapter 3 of TRPA's Code of Ordinances (Section 3.7.2.F) requires a discussion of the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity. This requirement recognizes that short-term uses and long-term productivity are linked, and the opportunities acted upon in the near term have corollary opportunity costs in relation to foregone options and productivity that could have continuing effects well into the future. The following discussion addresses how the Project would affect the short-term use and the long-term productivity of the environment. In general, "short-term" is used here to refer to the construction period of the Project, while "long-term" refers to the operational life of the Project.

Construction of the proposed Project or Alternative A would result in the use of energy and resources. These alternatives would result in short-term construction-related impacts such as: interference with local traffic and circulation, air emissions, increases in ambient noise levels, and construction-related runoff. However, these impacts would be temporary, occurring only during construction, and are not expected to alter the long-term productivity of the natural environment.

Approval of either the proposed Project or Alternative A would commit the respective sites to long-term development and would result in a minor increase in visitation at the site. This increase in use of the proposed Project site or Alternative A site would have associated impacts to hydrology and water quality, biological resources, traffic and circulation; air quality; greenhouse gas emissions and climate change; noise; utilities; and energy. Implementation of either the proposed Project or Alternative A would, however, help to sustain natural resources and support social and economic health.

On the whole, the Project's long-term beneficial effects related to enhancing recreational offerings (e.g., improved access to cross-country ski trails for beginners at the proposed Project site); increased year-round opportunities for special events, community events, and private events; reduction in on-street parking impacts in the neighborhood during the winter; and implementation of BMPs would outweigh the potential short-term impacts on the environment resulting primarily from Project construction and the long-term incremental increases in traffic.

5.3 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES AND SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

A commitment of resources is irreversible and irretrievable when the use or consumption of such resources is neither renewable nor recoverable for use in the future. Chapter 3 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances (Section 3.7.2.G) and Section 15126.2 of the State CEQA Guidelines require a discussion of such resources. The commitment of resources refers to the use of nonrenewable resources such as fossil fuels, water, and electricity, and also to changes to land use which would commit future generations to similar uses.

The irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources is the permanent loss of resources for future or alternative purposes. Irreversible and irretrievable resources are those that cannot be recovered or recycled or those that are consumed or reduced to unrecoverable forms. The Project development alternatives would result in the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of energy and material resources during construction and operation.

Energy would be expended in the form of gasoline, diesel fuel, oil for equipment and transportation vehicles, and human labor. Construction activities would generate non-recyclable materials, such as solid waste and construction debris. Electricity would be expended for the construction and operation of features of the Project. Required building materials would include a variety of materials such as rocks, wood, concrete, glass, steel, and other materials. Using these nonrenewable resources is expected to account for a small portion of the resources in the Lake Tahoe Basin and their area of origin (generally, northern California and Nevada) and would not affect the availability of these resources for other needs within the Tahoe Basin.

5.4 SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

CEQA Section 21100(b)(2)(A) states that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth "[i]n a separate section...[a]ny significant effect on the environment that cannot be avoided if the Project is implemented." State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b) requires that an EIR describe any significant impacts, including those that can be mitigated but not reduced to a less-than-significant level. Section 5.8.B (2) of the TRPA Code of Ordinances requires an EIS to include any significant adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should any of the alternatives be implemented.

Sections 3.3 through 3.12 of this EIR address the potential environmental effects of the proposed Project and Alternative A and recommend mitigation measures, as necessary, to mitigate Project effects to the extent feasible. The analysis concludes that proposed Project and Alternative A would not result in significant and unavoidable impacts.

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