

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This Draft EIR is an informational document prepared for the Town of Truckee (herein referred to as “Town”) to evaluate potential environmental impacts of the proposed Canyon Springs Subdivision project (previously known as “Tahoe Boca”). This Draft EIR evaluates the potential environmental effects that might result from the proposed project and has been prepared in accordance with the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines, this Draft EIR is a document intended to inform public decision makers, responsible or interested agencies, and the general public of the potential environmental effects of the proposed Canyon Springs Subdivision. The environmental review process has been established to enable interested parties to evaluate a proposed project in terms of its environmental consequences, to examine and implement methods to eliminate or reduce potential adverse impacts, and to consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project. While CEQA requires that major consideration be given to avoiding adverse environmental effects, the Lead Agency and other responsible public agencies must balance adverse environmental effects against other public objectives, including the economic and social benefits of a proposed project, in determining whether a proposed project should be approved. This document is also intended to serve for CEQA compliance purposes for Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in review of annexation into the Truckee Donner Public Utility District and the proposed 5-acre road annexation and SOI amendment (if this road annexation is pursued).

1.1 Procedures and Purpose

As prescribed by CEQA, the Town, in its role as Lead Agency, has determined that an EIR shall be prepared for the proposed project. On April 12, 2006, the Town prepared and circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to responsible, trustee, and local agencies for review and comment. A copy of the NOP and copies of written responses to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this Draft EIR. Appendix A will also include comments received during the NOP for the Tahoe Boca project which was circulated from May 11, 2004 to June 11, 2004, since the Tahoe Boca project was proposed on the same site by the same applicant. A public scoping meeting was held for the proposed Canyon Springs project at the Town’s City Hall on April 4, 2006.

The Draft EIR will consider all potential environmental effects of the proposed project to determine the level of significance of the environmental effect, and will analyze these potential effects to the detail necessary to make a determination of significance. The EIR discussion of less-than-significant environmental effects will be limited to a brief explanation of why those effects are not considered potentially significant.

Section 15121(a) of the CEQA Guidelines define an EIR as an informational document that will:

...inform public agency decision-makers and the public generally of the significant environmental effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

As defined by Section 15378 of the CEQA Guidelines, a "project" is any action that "...has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment..." Section 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines requires decision-makers to balance the benefits of a proposed project against any unavoidable adverse environmental effects of the proposed project. If the benefits of the proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, then the decision-makers may adopt a statement of overriding considerations, finding that the environmental effects are acceptable in light of the proposed project's benefits to the public.

The CEQA process requires that the Lead Agency seriously consider input from other interested agencies, citizen groups, and individuals. CEQA provides for a public process requiring full public disclosure of the expected environmental consequences of the proposed action. The public must be given a meaningful opportunity to comment on the environmental document. CEQA also requires monitoring of the mitigation measures to ensure that they are in fact carried out.

CEQA requires a public review period, normally 45 days, for commenting on the Draft EIR. During the review period, any agency, group, or individual may comment in writing on the Draft EIR, and the Lead Agency must respond to each comment on environmental issues in the Final EIR. According to Section 15202 of the CEQA Guidelines, CEQA does not require formal hearings at any stage of the environmental review process; however, it is typical to consider the EIR and its findings during public hearings required for the proposed project.

If the Town finds that the Final EIR is "adequate and complete," the Town may certify the Final EIR in writing in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15091, and if applicable, Section 15093. CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 specifies that the lead agency shall state findings, in writing, of any environmental impacts and the changes made to lessen the impact or the reason why such mitigation is infeasible. CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 requires a statement of overriding considerations in cases where the lead agency deems the proposed project's benefits outweigh unavoidable environmental impacts. The rule of adequacy generally holds that the EIR can be certified if:

- 1) The EIR shows a good faith effort at full disclosure of environmental information; and
- 2) The EIR provides sufficient analysis to allow decisions to be made regarding the proposed project in contemplation of environmental considerations.

Public Resources Code Section 21081.6(a) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15097 require lead agencies to adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) to describe measures that have been adopted or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or

avoid significant effects on the environment. Any mitigation measures adopted by the Town as conditions of project approval will be included in this report to verify compliance. This MMRP is adopted by Resolution at the time of project approval.

All comments or questions regarding this DEIR should be addressed to:

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10183 Truckee Airport Road
Truckee, CA 96161
(530) 582-7820

1.2 Organization of the EIR

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One briefly describes the procedures and purpose for environmental evaluation of the proposed project, the contents and organization of the Draft EIR, and a brief methodology discussions.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two provides the proposed project location, proposed action, project description, the project objectives, the uses of the EIR, and agency actions and permit requirements.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three provides an environmental analysis evaluating each topical area. Each topical area is organized as follows:

Introduction. Each environmental topic is preceded by a description of the topic and a brief statement of the rationale for addressing the topic.

Environmental Setting. Description of the existing environment in and around the proposed project area.

Regulatory Setting. A discussion of the regulatory environment that may be applicable to the proposed project.

Thresholds of Significance. The thresholds of significance are the standards or thresholds by which impacts are measured, with the objective being the determination of whether an impact will be significant or less than significant. The purpose is to establish the level at which an environmental impact will be considered significant.

Impacts. Each impact associated with an environmental topic is described and listed by number for reference.

Discussion/Conclusion. This is an analysis and concluding statement identifying whether the impact is significant or less-than-significant. If found to be significant, the conclusion states whether the impact can be avoided or reduced to an acceptable level through implementation of mitigation measures, or whether the impact is significant and unavoidable.

Mitigation Measures. Each feasible mitigation measure is described and listed by number. Existing regulations are described, but are not treated as mitigation measures that must be repeated in the EIR. Rather, they are assumed to be existing law with which the proposed project must comply.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four describes and evaluates alternatives to the proposed project. The proposed project is compared to each alternative, and the environmental ramifications of each are analyzed. Per requirements of CEQA Guidelines §15126.6[e][1], the “no project” alternative must be considered to compare the environmental consequences of the project as proposed to the consequences of taking no action.

CHAPTER FIVE

Chapter Five evaluates and describes the following CEQA required topics: impacts considered less-than-significant, significant and irreversible impacts, growth inducing effects, and significant and unavoidable environmental effects.

APPENDICES

References to published literature or technical reports cited in the text have been included at the end of this Draft EIR to facilitate full environmental review of the proposed project. Also included are the names and agencies of individuals contacted for information during EIR preparation.

1.3 Methodology

The Town has determined that a project level EIR shall be prepared for the Canyon Springs Subdivision project. An Initial Study was not prepared for the proposed project and the Town has not made any determinations regarding less than significant environmental effects of the project. A project level EIR is described in Section 15161 of the State CEQA Guidelines as one that examines the environmental impacts of a specific development project. A project level EIR must examine all phases of the proposed project, including planning, construction, and operation.

The Canyon Springs Subdivision is evaluated at a project level of detail in this EIR. This EIR is intended to provide the information and environmental analysis necessary to assist public agency decision-makers in considering all of the approvals necessary to build the proposed Canyon Springs Subdivision. Based upon the comments received on the NOP prepared by the Town, it has been determined that the EIR should focus on the environmental aspects outlined below:

AESTHETICS

The EIR will include an analysis of the proposed project's visibility from nearby viewing points. The EIR will also analyze any undesirable aesthetic impacts created within the proposed development. Light and glare impacts to residential properties and roadways from light sources and impacts to the night sky will also be evaluated.

AIR QUALITY

The EIR will identify sensitive receptors for air pollutants in the vicinity of the proposed project; identify construction emissions, operational emissions and indirect source emissions. Particulate matter emissions from the project will be identified and analyzed for consistency with the objectives and control strategies of the Town Particulate Matter Air Quality Management Plan.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section provides a discussion of the biological resources on the proposed project site and within the region, using the results of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), the California Native Plant Society Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, a list of special-status plant and wildlife species from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the Martis Peak 7.5-minute quadrangle search, and field investigations. This section then provides an impact analysis and recommendations for mitigating potentially significant impacts. The EIR identifies and evaluates potential habitats for special-status species and other biological resources within and near the proposed project site. Analysis in this section focuses on impacts to listed species and unique habitat types as well as deer migration corridors.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This section discusses the cultural resources known to occur in the area, the results of the archeological studies conducted on the proposed project site, an impact analysis, and recommendations for mitigating potentially significant impacts.

GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The EIR will identify significant geological and soil impacts associated with development of the proposed project site (e.g., grading, soil erosion, drainage alterations, geologic stability, seismic hazards).

HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The EIR will review potential sources of hazards or safety considerations that may affect the proposed project site, including the presence of hazardous materials, flooding and airport related impacts.

HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

The EIR will identify significant impacts associated with drainage flows and water quality arising from development of the proposed project site. Includes will be construction as well as operational water quality impacts. Watersheds will be mapped and characterized and all waters under the authority of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board will be identified.

LAND USE, PLANNING AND RECREATION

The EIR will identify the proposed project's consistency with the applicable plans, programs, and ordinances of the Town including the General Plan and Development Code. A land use survey will be conducted and the proposed project's compatibility with surrounding land uses will be evaluated.

NOISE

This section discusses the existing noise standards, ambient noise, construction-related noise, and impacts that are likely to result from proposed project implementation. This noise analysis provides a determination of whether there are nearby noise sources that may affect future residents. Noise is assessed based on consistency with applicable state, regional and local policies and plans, as well as the proposed project's generated traffic levels.

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The EIR will identify the proposed project's consistency with the applicable housing plans, programs, and ordinances of the Town and any significant environmental issues associated with direct and indirect population growth, such as an increased demand for affordable housing, jobs/housing balance and live/work units.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND UTILITIES

The EIR will identify existing service levels of public service and utility providers and any significant public service impact that may result from implementation of the proposed project. This will include an evaluation of service capacity/availability of public services/utilities under existing and future (cumulative) conditions and will also consider short-term peak demands for services during construction.

TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

The EIR will identify transportation related impacts associated with the proposed project, including impacts to surrounding roadways and intersections, and the regional network. Traffic generation will be estimated and a traffic distribution pattern will be identified. Site access plans and existing roadway geometrics will be evaluated. Construction traffic will also be estimated and its impacts identified. Programs to encourage alternative modes of transportation will be reviewed for project applicability, including transit, bicycle and pedestrian access.