

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PURPOSE OF EIR

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the potential environmental consequences of the proposed Railyard Draft Master Plan Project (project). This EIR is designed to inform Town staff, the Planning Commission, Town Council, Redevelopment Agency, and other responsible and interested agencies, and the general public of: (1) the proposed project and the potential environmental consequences of the project; (2) mitigation measures recommended to lessen or avoid significant adverse impacts; and (3) a reasonable range of feasible alternatives to the project. The information contained in the EIR will be reviewed and considered by public agencies prior to making a decision to approve, reject, or modify the proposed project. The Town of Truckee (Town) is the lead agency for environmental review of the proposed project.

B. PROPOSED PROJECT

The Railyard Master Plan Area (Master Plan Area) is located at the eastern end of historic Downtown Truckee. The Master Plan Area is an integral part of Downtown Truckee, and is comprised primarily of an area historically occupied by the railyard and lumber mill. The area is generally bounded by Glenshire Drive to the north, industrial uses and undeveloped land to the east, Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way and East River Street to the south, and Donner Pass Road and Bridge Street to the west, as shown in Figure I-1. The Master Plan Area includes approximately 75 acres of land and is comprised of 20 parcels.

Under the Master Plan, development is planned to provide an eclectic mix of building types and uses within an attractive, pedestrian-oriented neighborhood development that will extend easterly from the Downtown. The highest development intensity is proposed to occur immediately adjacent to the Downtown Core and then decrease as development extends to the north and east. The Master Plan recognizes the importance of allowing development within the Master Plan Area to “grow organically” to accommodate market demands and the community needs. As such, the Draft Master Plan policies and regulations allow for a mix of uses and a range of development intensities and densities. To help ensure that development does not substantially exceed what would be appropriate for Truckee, the Draft Master Plan proposes a development cap which is referred to as the Maximum Allowable Development (MAD). The MAD is intended to detail the most intensive development scenario that could occur under the Draft Master Plan, but it is not intended to represent the exact development scenario that would occur.

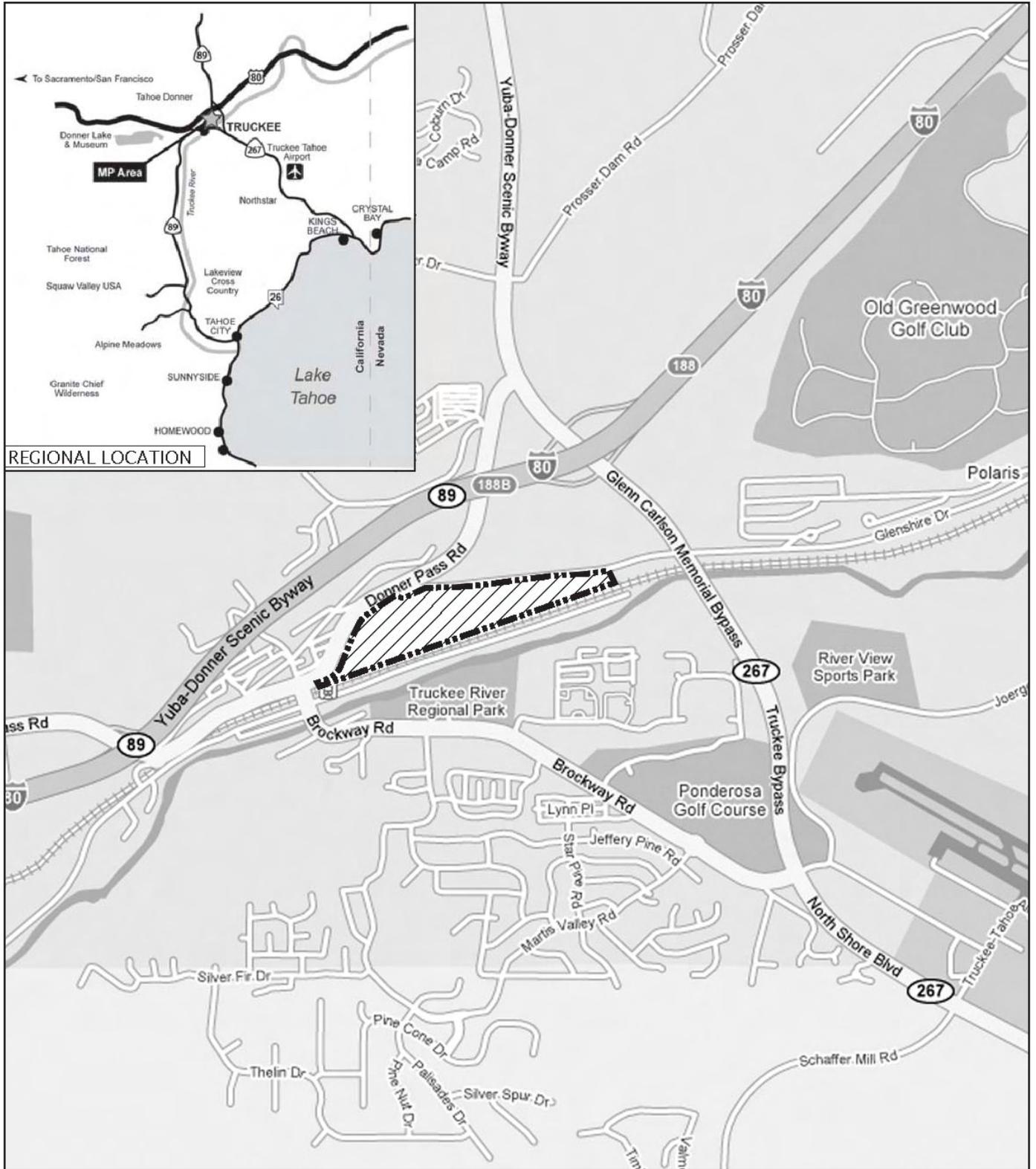


FIGURE I-1

Truckee Railyard Master Plan EIR
Local and Regional Vicinity Map



LEGEND

 PROJECT AREA



SOURCE: GOOGLE MAPS, 2006.

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In accordance with the MAD that is described in the Draft Master Plan, buildout of the Master Plan Area could include up to 570 residential units including 25 single-family units and 545 multi-family units;¹ a 60-room hotel; a 1,000-seat movie theater; 70,000 square feet of retail space; 15,000 square feet of office space; a 20,000-square-foot grocery store and 25,000 square feet of civic use.

The proposed project also includes several public infrastructure upgrades, including the realignment and extension of Donner Pass Road, the extension of Church Street, new internal streets within the Master Plan Area, and utility connections (i.e., water, sewer, electrical, gas) to service the Master Plan Area.

C. EIR SCOPE

The Town of Truckee circulated a Notices of Preparation (NOP), which stated that all environmental topics identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines would be evaluated in the EIR. The NOP was published on December 21, 2007, and the public comment period for the scope of the EIR lasted from December 21, 2007 to February 4, 2008.² The NOP was sent to responsible and trustee agencies, organizations, and interested individuals. Additionally, the NOP were sent to the State Clearinghouse.

Two scoping sessions were held for the project. The first was a public scoping session for public agencies on January 16, 2008. The second scoping meeting was held in conjunction with a Planning Commission meeting on January 16, 2008. Additionally, the Town Council held a public hearing to consider the scope of work (and comments previously received) at a Town Council meeting on February 7, 2008. Comments received by the Town on the NOP at the agency scoping meeting and at the public scoping meeting were taken into account during the preparation of the EIR. NOP comments were received from public agencies, neighboring property owners and concerned citizens regarding a wide range of issues to be addressed in this EIR. Topic areas that were most widely referenced in the NOP comments letters include transportation, parking, cultural resources, noise and visual resources. Additionally, several comments related to non-CEQA topics (i.e., building design, architecture and desired uses for the civic building). The NOP and written comments received are included in Appendix A.

The following environmental topics are addressed in this EIR:

- A. Land Use and Planning Policy
- B. Population, Employment and Housing

¹ Of the 545 multi-family units, 125 may be work/live units, where the primary use of the unit is a business. For example, a shop downstairs and a small loft with living quarters for the shop owner.

² The Town of Truckee extended the NOP comment period from 30 days to 45 days to allow maximum opportunity for public comment.

- C. Transportation, Circulation and Parking
- D. Air Quality
- E. Noise and Vibration
- F. Geology, Soils and Seismicity
- G. Hydrology and Storm Drainage
- H. Biological Resources
- I. Cultural and Paleontological Resources
- J. Hazards and Public Safety
- K. Utilities
- L. Public Services
- M. Visual Resources

Environmental topics not warranting detailed evaluation (agricultural resources and mineral resources) are discussed in Chapter VI.D, under Effects Found Not to be Significant.

D. REPORT ORGANIZATION

This EIR is organized into the following chapters:

- *Chapter I – Introduction:* Discusses the overall EIR purpose; provides a summary of the proposed project; describes the EIR scope; and summarizes the organization of the EIR.
- *Chapter II – Summary:* Provides a summary of the impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, and describes mitigation measures recommended to avoid or reduce significant impacts.
- *Chapter III – Project Description:* Provides a description of the project objectives, Plan Area, site development history, the proposed development, and required approval process.
- *Chapter IV – Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures:* Describes the following for each environmental technical topic: existing conditions (setting); policies from the Draft Master that are relevant to the specific impact; significance criteria; potential environmental impacts and their level of significance; and mitigation measures recommended when necessary to mitigate identified impacts. Potential adverse impacts are identified by levels of significance, as follows: less-than-significant impact (LTS), significant impact (S), and significant and unavoidable impact (SU). The significance level is identified for each impact before and after implementation of the recommended mitigation measure(s).
- *Chapter V – Alternatives:* Provides an evaluation of alternatives to the proposed project. The alternatives include the: No Project Alternative; Reduced Development Alternative; and the Maintain Donner Pass Road Alternative.

- *Chapter VI – CEQA-Required Assessment Conclusions:* Provides the required analysis of growth-inducing impacts; significant irreversible changes; effects found not to be significant; and significant unavoidable and cumulative impacts.
- *Chapter VII – Report Preparation:* Identifies preparers of the EIR, references used, and the persons and organizations contacted.
- *Appendices:* The appendices contain the NOP and written comments submitted on the NOPs; traffic, air quality and noise modeling data and supporting analysis; and the Water Supply Assessment.

All supporting technical documents and the reference documents are available for public review at the Town of Truckee Community Development Department.

