

VI. CEQA REQUIRED CONCLUSIONS AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

As required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this chapter discusses the following types of impacts that could result from implementation of the Truckee Railyard Draft Master Plan: effects found not to be significant; growth-inducing impacts; unavoidable significant environmental impacts; significant irreversible changes; and cumulative impacts.

A. EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Meetings among representatives of Town of Truckee departments involved in project planning and review, consultants for the Town, and the project applicant were held to preliminarily determine the scope of the EIR. In addition to these meetings, a Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated on December 21, 2007 and two public scoping sessions were held for the project. The first was a public scoping session for public agencies and the second public scoping meeting was held in conjunction with a Planning Commission meeting. Both meetings were 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. Written comments received on the NOP and public comments received during the scoping meetings were considered in the preparation of the final scope for this document and evaluation of the proposed project.

The environmental topics analyzed in Chapter IV, Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures, represent those topics which generated the greatest potential controversy and expectation of adverse impacts among the project team and members of the public. Two topics typically considered in an EIR of this type and scale were determined to be less-than-significant during the scoping phase: Agricultural Resources and Mineral Resources. As a result, they are not considered in Chapter IV of this EIR. A brief description of why they are not significant is provided below.

1. Agricultural Resources

No agricultural uses or farmland are present within or adjacent to the Plan Area. The Plan Area is currently developed with Union Pacific Railyard operations (a railroad operations building, balloon track and storage tracks), eight homes, a portion of the Tahoe Tree Company, Tahoe-Truckee Lumber Company, a glazier, a card-lock fueling facility, and Trout Creek which runs along the northern portion of the Master Plan Area.

2. Mineral Resources

The Town of Truckee General Plan does not identify the Plan Area as a site containing mineral resources. Additionally, the Nevada County General Plan does not identify the Plan Area as significant sand and gravel aggregate resource areas or as a generalized aggregate extraction site. No known mineral resources are located within or near the Plan Area.

B. GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

This section summarizes the project's growth-inducing impacts on the surrounding community. According to CEQA, a project is typically considered growth-inducing if it would foster economic or population growth. Examples of projects likely to have significant growth-inducing impacts include extensions or expansions of infrastructure systems beyond what is needed to serve project-specific demand, and development of new residential subdivisions or industrial parks in areas that are currently only sparsely developed or are undeveloped.

Based on the Maximum Allowable Development (MAD, described in Chapter III, Project Description, of this EIR), it is estimated that buildout of the Master Plan could result in up to 570 new residential units (including 125 work/live units). Based on the Town's current average household size, the development of residential units within the Master Plan could result in the addition of 1,470 persons to the Town's population as further described in Section IV.B, Population, Housing and Employment. It should be noted that this is a conservative (higher worst case vs. lower) calculation of population increase given that 125 of the maximum residential units would be work/live units, and that the size and type of units proposed within the Master Plan Area would be smaller than the average household size in the Town. Additionally, it is likely that some of the units would be only seasonally occupied. As discussed in this EIR, the Town experiences a seasonal vacancy rate of approximately 44 percent of the total units. Applying this vacancy percentage on the units within the Master Plan Area would result in an increase to the Town's "full-time population" of approximately 818 persons. The addition of 570 residential units is equal to approximately 4.8 percent of the Town's total amount of existing dwelling units.

The MAD would also allow up to 70,000 square feet of retail area and 15,000 square feet of office space (not including up to 1,000 square feet of retail or office area that may be included as part of each work/live unit), a 60-room hotel, a 1,000-seat movie theatre, a 20,000-square-foot grocery store, and a 25,000-square-foot civic building space. Exclusive of the movie theater and hotel developments, it is estimated that implementation and build out of the Master Plan would result in approximately 421 jobs if all commercial uses permitted under the MAD are developed.

The proposed project would bring expanded utilities infrastructure into an area where a level of infrastructure currently exists to support the railyard and less intense uses. The expanded infrastructure would be sized to accommodate the project needs. There are no significant areas that are undeveloped and adjacent to the project that would be subject to facilitated development as a result of the project.

C. UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

After mitigation, the project would result in the following significant unavoidable impacts:

- Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would result in an increase in long-term regional emissions that would exceed the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District significance criteria.
- Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would contribute to significant unavoidable transportation impacts: level of service at the Donner Pass Road/Bridge Street intersection and Bridge Street/West River Street intersections, and the roadway segment of SR 267 between I-80 and Brockway Road.
- Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would expose persons to railroad noise.
- Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would remove one (or possibly two) structures of cultural significance.

D. SIGNIFICANT IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES

CEQA requires that EIRs assess whether the proposed project would result in significant irreversible changes to the physical environment. The CEQA Guidelines discuss three categories of significant irreversible changes that should be considered. Each is discussed below.

1. Changes in Land Use which Commit Future Generations

Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would commit future generations to development on approximately 75 acres land within Downtown Truckee that currently contains limited vertical development. The Draft Master Plan would convert land used for railyard, lumber, and industrial uses (with minor residential uses consisting of eight homes) to residential, retail/commercial, office, hotel, and civic uses. This would result in industrial land being permanently changed to a mix of residential and commercial uses, and would commit future generations to the uses proposed within the Draft Master Plan. This change in land use is consistent with the vision and policies contained in the Truckee General Plan and Downtown Specific Plan.

2. Irreversible Damage from Environmental Accidents

No significant environmental damage, such as accidental spills or explosion of a hazardous material, is anticipated with implementation of the Draft Master Plan. The use of hazardous materials (beyond standard construction supplies and household hazardous waste) is not proposed. While there are hazardous materials on the site, mitigation measures are presented to reduce potential impacts associated with these hazards. No other potential environmental effect of the project (e.g., traffic, air quality, water quality) would reach the point of creating irreversible damage from foreseeable accidents given the land uses proposed.

3. Consumption of Nonrenewable Resources

Consumption of nonrenewable resources includes increased energy consumption, conversion of agricultural lands, and lost access to mining reserves. Because the site has not been used for mineral extraction, loss of access to any minerals that historically occurred on-site would not be considered significant. Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would require electricity and natural gas. However, the scale of such consumption for the proposed uses would be typical for a residential and commercial development of this size. The project would not convert land used for prime agriculture to residential and public uses, as no agricultural uses or farmland are present within or adjacent to the Master Plan Area.

E. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

CEQA defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable, or which can compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR evaluate potential environmental impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively significant.

1. Methodology

When evaluating cumulative impacts, CEQA allows the use of either a list of past, present, or reasonably anticipated relevant projects, including projects outside the control of the lead agency, or a summary of the projections in an adopted planning document. This cumulative impacts analysis considers development that is likely to occur under the buildout of the General Plan.

2. Cumulative Effects of the Proposed Projects

The following analysis examines the cumulative effects of the proposed projects. The potential cumulative effects of the proposed projects are summarized below for each of the topics that are analyzed in Chapter IV of the EIR.

a. Land Use and Planning Policy. As analyzed throughout Section IV.A, Land Use and Planning Policy, implementation of the Draft Master Plan would not result in a significant land use impact by potentially physically dividing an established community; or conflicting with adjacent or nearby land uses; or conflicting with applicable land use plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. (The Plan Area is not located in or near an area guided by a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.) The land uses and policies within the Draft Master Plan are consistent with Truckee's General Plan Land Use designation for the site. Thus, the implementation of the Draft Master Plan would not exacerbate any significant adverse land use impacts that may be associated with other cumulative development. A review of cumulative development in the defined geographic area, including past, present, existing, pending and reasonably foreseeable future development does not reveal any significant adverse cumulative impacts in the area.

Cumulative development, in combination with the proposed master plan, has and would continue to result in the development and redevelopment of infill or vacant sites throughout the area. The project is generally consistent with adopted plans and the overall vision for the area. Based on the information in this land use section and for the reasons summarized above, the project would not contribute to any significant adverse cumulative land use impacts when considered together with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future development.

b. Population, Employment and Housing. Based on the Maximum Allowable Development, it is estimated that buildout of the Master Plan could result in up to 570 new residential units (including 125 work/live units) with an associated "full-time population" increase of 1,470 persons. The addition of 570 residential units is equal to approximately 4.8 percent of the Town's total amount of existing dwelling units. In addition, exclusive of the movie theater and hotel developments, it is estimated that implementation and buildout of the Master Plan would result in approximately 421 jobs if all commercial uses permitted under the MAD are developed.

The addition of housing and development that would result from implementation of the Draft Master Plan is within the Town's housing and population projections identified in the General Plan. No significant adverse cumulative impacts related to population, housing and employment would result from implementation of the Railyard Master Plan.

c. Transportation, Circulation, and Parking. Section IV.C, Transportation, Circulation, and Parking, includes a detailed analysis of the cumulative and future conditions related to transportation. Implementation of the Master Plan would contribute to several significant adverse cumulative transportation impacts under the 2025 cumulative conditions scenario, including three roadway segments and nine intersections. Please refer to that discussion for cumulative transportation impacts resulting from the implementation of the Draft Master Plan and recommended mitigation measures.

d. Air Quality. A number of individual projects in the Town of Truckee may be under construction simultaneously with the proposed project. Depending on construction schedules and actual implementation of projects in and around Town, generation of fugitive dust and pollutant emissions during construction may result in short-term air pollutants, which would contribute to short-term cumulative air quality impacts. However, each individual project would be subject to NSAQMD rules, regulations, and other mitigation requirements during construction.

Currently, Truckee is in a non-attainment area for ozone and PM10 standards. Construction of the proposed projects, in conjunction with other planned developments within the study area, would contribute to the non-attainment status. Thus, the proposed projects would exacerbate nonattainment of air quality standards within Nevada County. Section IV.D, Air Quality, includes a discussion of cumulative and future conditions related to air quality.

e. Noise and Vibration. Cumulative noise analysis for implementation of the Draft Master Plan considers both short-term construction related noise and longer-term operational and traffic related noise. Short-term noise impacts are related to the noise generated by heavy equipment operating on the Plan Area. Demolition and site preparation phases are typically the loudest phases of construction due to the types of equipment used. The worst case combined noise level during this phase of construction would be approximately 91 dBA Lmax at a distance of 50 feet from an active construction area. The impacts from construction noise, including pile driving, would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with implementation of recommended mitigation measures included in Section IV.E-1. With implementation of these mitigation measures, this cumulative impact would be considered less than significant.

Longer-term noise from cumulative development in the area would primarily occur from motor vehicle traffic. Cumulative traffic noise levels in the Master Plan Area were estimated using traffic data provided by LSC Transportation Consultants and are presented in Table IV.E-11 and IV.E-12. As shown in the tables, the combination of project and cumulative traffic would not increase traffic noise levels by greater than 5 dBA along the analyzed roadway segments. Therefore, this increase would not be perceptible over the total noise levels that were monitored along these segments. Traffic noise forms one component of the total noise environment. An increase in traffic noise of 5 dBA would not necessarily translate to an increase of 5 dBA in the total ambient noise environment. When the resultant noise levels from project combined with cumulative traffic (past, present, existing, approved, pending and reasonably foreseeable future development) along these segments are logarithmically added to the existing monitored noise levels, the increase would be less than 5 dBA and hence, less than significant.

f. Geology, Soils and Seismicity. The potential cumulative impacts for geology do not generally extend far beyond a project's boundaries, since geological impacts are confined to

discrete spatial locations and do not combine to create an extensive cumulative impact condition. The exception to this generalization would occur where a large geologic feature (e.g., fault zone, massive landslide) might affect an extensive area, or where the development effects from the project could affect the geology of an off-site location. These circumstances are not present on the Plan Area, and implementation of the Draft Master Plan would not make a considerable contribution to a significant cumulative geologic impact.

g. Hydrology and Storm Drainage. Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would result in an increase in impervious surface area and an increase in the amount of storm water generated on the Plan Area. Construction and operational impacts to stormwater that would result from implementation of the proposed project would be minimized through implementation of the SWPPP. The runoff from the Plan Area, in combination with other sites, could exceed the capacity of conveyance structures. The project applicant must incorporate design features and demonstrate the project's ability to contain and convey stormwater on the Plan Area. Other current, pending or foreseeable projects in Truckee would be required to undergo the same water quality maintenance measures, and would not result in cumulative adverse impacts to water quality.

h. Biological Resources. Impacts to plant communities and associated wildlife would occur as a result of implementation of the Draft Master Plan. The impacts will be relatively minor due to the developed and disturbed nature of the Master Plan Area. As described in Section IV.H, Biological Resources, implementation of the project would consist of the loss of mixed willow community, Jeffrey pine community, as well as degraded non-wetland waters in Trout Creek. Potentially significant biological resources impacts include impacts to nesting yellow warbler and/or other birds, willow flycatcher, and Sierra Nevada mountain yellow-legged frog. Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would also impact waters of the US and CDFG, including approximately 0.31-acre of non-wetland waters in Trout Creek (no wetlands would be impacted) and 0.37-acre of CDFG waters. With implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3 and BIO-4, potential impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level. Consequently, the project would not result in significant cumulative effects.

i. Cultural and Paleontological Resources. Implementation of the proposed project has the potential to significantly impact cultural and paleontological resources. The Plan Area contains seven architectural resources that qualify as historical resources under CEQA. As described in Section IV.I, Cultural and Paleontological Resources, the character of the area would not be compromised such that a substantial adverse change in the significance of any of the contributing properties in the Truckee Historic District would occur.

Construction activities associated with the proposed project and cumulative projects could result in significant impacts to unidentified archaeological and paleontological resources, and human remains. However, like the proposed project, the cumulative projects would be subject to extensive mitigation measures designed to protect unidentified cultural and

paleontological resources. Such mitigation would include the monitoring of construction areas and ensuring that the recovery of human remains is reported to the proper authorities. With implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, the proposed projects would not result in any significant and unavoidable impact. The project would not contribute to any significant cumulative cultural and paleontological resources impact.

j. Hazards and Public Safety. Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would help to ensure that existing hazardous materials contamination on the Plan Area is remediated. As with other residential developments within the Town of Truckee, the project would contribute to an increase in the generation of household hazardous wastes in the Town. Given the residential and commercial uses allowed for the proposed projects, it is unlikely that the project would involve the use or storage of large quantities of hazardous materials or waste. The proposed project would not result in significant cumulative hazardous materials impact.

k. Utilities. Implementation of the Draft Master Plan would increase the demand on utility providers and infrastructures in the Plan Area. None of the various public services or utilities analyzed would experience significant impacts that could not be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. As such, no significant cumulative impact would result. A Water Supply Assessment determined that there is adequate water supply for the Implementation of the Draft Master Plan, as well as future development anticipated within the jurisdiction of the Truckee Donner Public Utility District.

l. Public Services. Implementation of the Draft Master Plan, and development in the Town, would result in a cumulative increase in the demand for public services, parks, and recreation facilities. This cumulative increase could result in the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. However, future development would occur pursuant to General Plan policies and mitigation measures adopted for the General Plan that reduce the potential impact on services to less-than-significant levels (including payment of the Town's development impact fees and school fees). As a result, implementation of the Draft Master Plan together with the impact of planned and future development would not result in significant cumulative public service impacts.

m. Visual Resources. The proposed project would transform an area that is currently developed with Union Pacific Railyard operations (a railroad operations building, balloon track and storage tracks), eight homes, a portion of the Tahoe Tree Company, Tahoe-Truckee Lumber Company, a glazier, and a card-lock fueling facility. The area would be transformed into an eclectic mix of primarily residential and retail/commercial uses. The Draft Master Plan recognizes the importance of transitioning development from historic Downtown to new development within the Master Plan Area. The Draft Master Plan includes several policies, development standards and design guidelines for new development which explicitly call for building design and streetscape improvements that are respectful of

historical architecture in the vicinity. Changing the industrial, vacant and underutilized land to residential and commercial development would not result in significant visual resource or visual character impacts from the implementation of the Draft Master Plan. Further, the Town of Truckee identifies the Plan Area as an area to be developed. As such, development of the Plan Area would not result in a significant cumulative visual impact.

