

Existing view to the southeast toward the project site from Olympic Village Inn in winter



Simulated view to the southeast toward the project site from Olympic Village Inn in winter

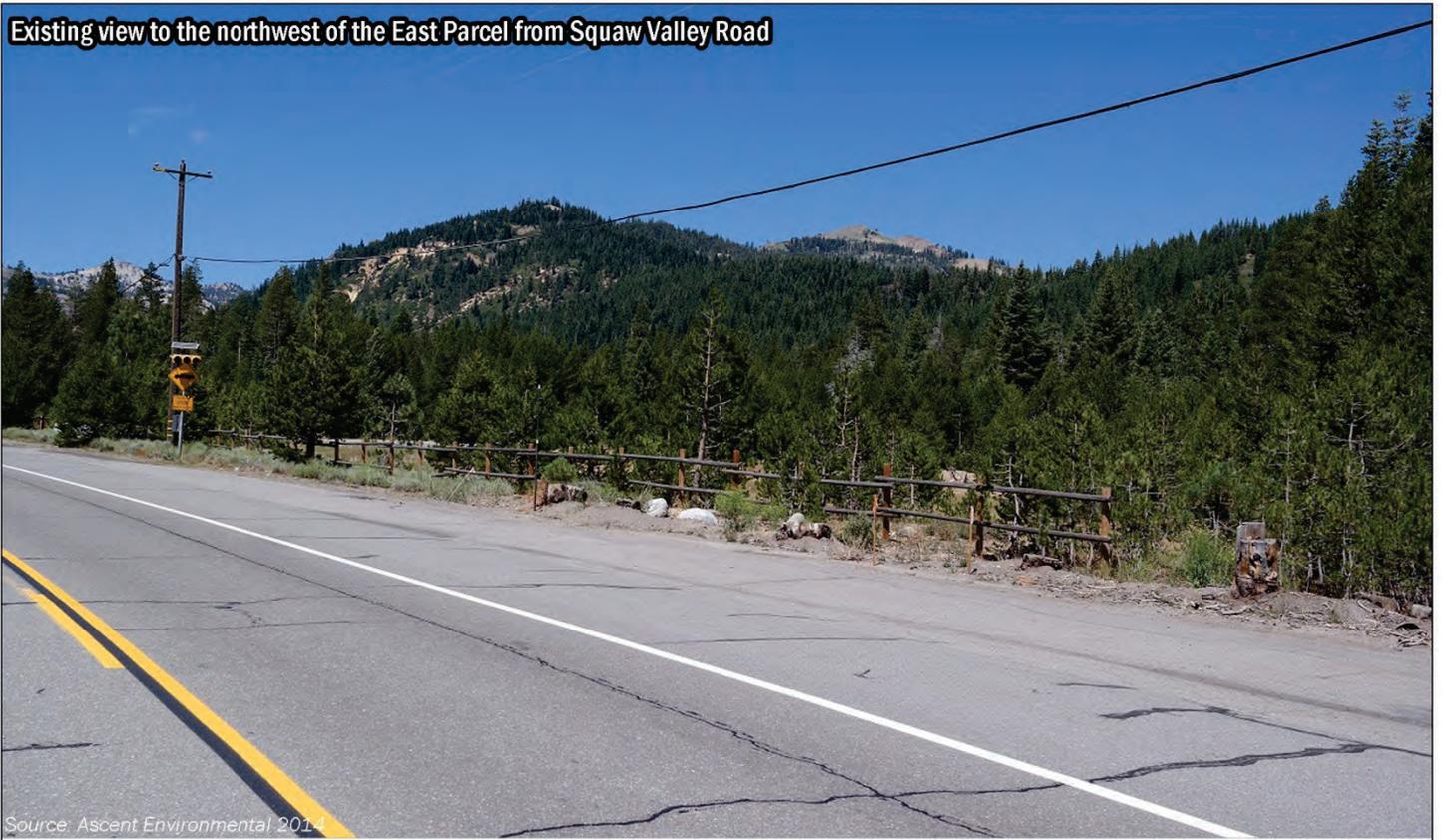


Source: Field of Vision 2015

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**Existing view to the northwest of the East Parcel from Squaw Valley Road**



Source: Ascent Environmental 2014

**Simulated view to the northwest of the East Parcel from Squaw Valley Road**



Source: Soft Mirage 2015

111010091-03-027

## VISUAL QUALITY OF THE PROJECT SITE

### Views of the Main Village Area from Residential Areas on the North Side of Squaw Valley

The quality of views of the main Village area as seen from the residential areas to the north of the project site is considered **average to moderately high** due to variability in the amount of the Village seen from individual existing residences. While these views contain natural elements in the foreground (i.e., trees that block more distant views of the slopes on the south side of the Valley), detracting elements such as utility lines are also present in many areas. Encroaching elements in the near foreground of the views (utility lines) and in the more distant foreground (expansive parking lots with scattered sheds) detract somewhat from unity and intactness of the views. The intactness and unity of the forested slopes across the Valley is also interrupted by the cleared ski runs and access roads that are visible on the slopes. However, ski runs are an element of the landscape expected by most visitors, and may not be considered by all to degrade the visual quality of the area. Viewpoints 1 and 2 in Exhibits 8-9 and 8-10 provide a representative view from the residential area on the north side of Squaw Valley south to the main Village area during day and night conditions.

### Views of the Main Village Area from Squaw Valley Road

The visual quality of views of the main Village area from Squaw Valley Road in the winter is considered **average to moderately high**. Vividness is high in views that include snow covered peaks contrasting with evergreen forested areas forming a backdrop for the resort structures. Foreground road and utility poles, and more distant structures to the south of the Intrawest Village reduce the intactness of the scene; however, snow and winter shadows soften the effects of the built environment and the backdrop of mountains dominates and unifies the view. These elements combine to provide distinctive and memorable views. These views are represented by Viewpoint 3 in Exhibit 8-11. During cloudy or winter storm conditions visual quality of the views may be reduced because the lower cloud ceiling reduces the visibility of the mountain peaks and reduces their dominance in views. This effect tends to amplify the intrusive qualities of the human built environment in the foreground, as depicted in Viewpoint 8 in Exhibit 8-16. Viewpoint 8 also provides a different view of the main Village area from Squaw Valley Road than the relative intactness of the mountain setting shown in Viewpoint 3. More of the Village can be seen in Viewpoint 8, and there are several discordant elements in the foreground (including utility lines, roadway signs, large expanses of parking, snow storage areas), and general lack of architectural unity that detract somewhat from the scenic mountain views in the background.

The visual quality of views of the main Village area from Squaw Valley Road in the spring and summer is considered **average**. Vividness is high with forested peaks forming a scenic backdrop for the resort structures. The foreground road, parking lots, free-standing structures, and utility poles encroach on the views and are more visible than in the winter when snow and shadow conditions reduce their dominance. The existing structures on the project site are of various architectural designs and orientation and do not present a unified pattern. The ski slopes cleared of trees, and lift facilities on the slopes above the resort, are clearly visible. The intactness of the view is reduced by visibility of these features; however, the backdrop of mountains remains dominant and unifies the elements in the view, creating somewhat distinctive and memorable views. These views are represented by Viewpoint 4 in Exhibit 8-12.

### Views of the Main Village Area from the Resort at Squaw Creek, the Meadow, and Golf Course

The visual quality of views to the main Village area in winter from the meadow and golf course area located east of the project site is considered **high**. Snow on the surrounding slopes contrasts with evergreen vegetation. The snow cover and winter shadow patterns reduce the dominance of intrusive structures in the landscape. The view is distinctive within the context of the resort setting Gondola lift and ski lift towers are visible, but blend with snow covered slopes and do not substantially detract from the view. Although the resort structures detract from the intactness of the natural view, they are set against the backdrop of mountains, which increases unity and presents a distinctive and memorable view in the context of the resort setting. These views are represented by Viewpoint 5 in Exhibit 8-13.

The visual quality of views of the main Village area in summer, spring, and fall as observed from the meadow and golf course area located east of the project site is considered **moderately high**. The parking structures and maintenance facilities to the south and lodging structures to the northwest of the Intrawest Village structures are more dominant in the view than in winter due to less shadowing on the south side of the Valley, which affects the intactness of the view. Other discordant elements, including the gondola lift and ski lift towers, are visible and stand out somewhat against the rock and on the ridgeline above the resort. Cleared ski runs detract from natural vegetation patterns on the mountain. However, as in winter, the main resort buildings are set against the backdrop of mountains and present a coherent visual pattern within the context of the resort and create a distinctive and memorable view. These views are represented by Viewpoint 6 in Exhibit 8-14.

### Views of the Main Village Area from Adjacent Resort Facilities

The visual quality of views of the main Village area from Intrawest Village structures adjacent to the east end of the project site is **average to moderately low**. While there are middleground and background views that possess scenic elements (meadow, forested mountain slopes, snow covered peaks), intrusive elements in the near foreground are dominant in the views (parking lots, parking garages, sheds, maintenance buildings, hotel structures). These views are represented by Viewpoints 9 and 10 in Exhibits 8-17 and 8-18.

The visual quality of views from the Olympic Village Inn at the northwest end of the Valley is considered **moderately high**. The near foreground views of aspen groves and conifers with forested and snow covered peaks to the south provide a scenic vista. The mixed conifer forest in the foreground serves to minimize built environment features in the foreground; however the rooftop and deck of the structure in the immediate foreground detract from the view. These views are represented by Viewpoint 11 in Exhibit 8-19.

### Views of the East Parcel from Squaw Valley Road

The visual quality of views of the East Parcel from Squaw Valley Road is considered **average** within the context of the surrounding forested landscape that has been modified with commercial and residential development. The distant view of the forested slopes and granite peaks in the middleground and background has minor intrusions from the utility lines and poles in foreground. The split rail fence along the road is in context with the setting. However, the foreground trees do not substantially screen the disturbed ground on the East Parcel. See Viewpoint 12 in Exhibit 8-20. Views of the East Parcel also include existing commercial development on the opposite side of Squaw Valley Road. The view of the East Parcel lacks intactness due to the lack of vegetation on the site and disturbed ground. The view of distant forested slopes and mountain peaks create a momentary point of focus for travelers on Squaw Valley Road. However, the view generally lacks highly distinctive features that would contribute to a memorable view or scenic vista.

## 8.1.4 Light and Glare Conditions

Existing lighting conditions in the main Village area are represented by Viewpoint 2 in Exhibit 8-10 and Viewpoint 7 in Exhibit 8-15. In Viewpoint 7 (Exhibit 8-15), lighting is visible through the windows of structures in the existing resort, exterior safety lighting, and exterior decorative lighting. Residences on the north slopes of the Valley are also a source of lighting, as well as vehicle headlights visible on the roadways as shown in Viewpoint 7. The existing land uses encompassing the Specific Plan area have very little lighting, except at the Far East Center as shown in Viewpoint 2 in Exhibit 8-10.

Night skiing requires more extensive lighting not shown in the photo. According to the Squaw Valley website, night skiing is open from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. on weekends, and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays. Night skiing requires extensive lighting on the slopes and contributes to sky glow conditions in the area (Tahoe Regional Planning Agency [TRPA] 2012:3.9-33).

## 8.1.5 Summary of Viewing Conditions

### VIEWER GROUPS AND VIEWER SENSITIVITY

#### Residents

Single-family residences are located on the south-facing slopes at the west end of the Valley overlooking the main Village area and are also located west and north of the East Parcel. Residents generally have a high degree of concern and sensitivity to change in the visual environment in close proximity to their homes and in the overall viewshed they experience in the area. This viewing group represents a relatively small number of people.

#### Resort Visitors (Winter and Summer)

Views of and from the resort area are open to the public at large. Resort visitors arrive with certain expectations of experiencing scenic views and natural types of surroundings within the context of the resort setting. Resort visitors do not have expectations of an undisturbed landscape because the resort, by definition, involves environmental modifications. Because these visitors may visit the resort for the purpose of relaxation and enjoyment of the surrounding scenic setting, sensitivity to visual change is considered moderately high.

The project site is visible to resort visitors in the summer and winter. Resort visitors in the existing main Village area can view the project site from balconies and from common areas (Exhibits 8-18 and 8-19, Viewpoints 10 and 11). Additionally, the project site is visible from the Resort at Squaw Creek, which is approximately 0.5 mile to the east of the main Village area (Exhibits 8-13 and 8-14, Viewpoints 5 and 6). Visitors at the Resort at Squaw Creek can view the project site from the common areas of the lodge including outdoor decks, restaurants, and from private rooms in the lodging portion of the resort.

#### Ski Area Visitors (Winter)

The project area would experience relatively large numbers of visitors engaged in winter sports activities. Winter visitors (day use and overnight) with a focus on snow sports have an expectation of an experience that involves use of lifts, gondolas, lodges, warming huts, and other facilities that entail human modification to the environment and also modifications to natural areas such as cleared ski slopes, constructed snow ramps and terrain parks, and groomed snow slopes. Although visitors anticipate modification of the immediate environment with infrastructure necessary to support their activities, views that are more natural in appearance contribute to the quality of the sporting experience because skiers and snowboarders enjoy surroundings with expansive views of snow covered peaks. Repeat visitors would have some sensitivity to visual changes; therefore, winter recreational visitors' sensitivity is considered moderately high to visual change.

#### Other Recreational Visitors (Summer Visitors)

##### Golfers

Golfers generally focus on the landscape in the immediate vicinity and middleground in relation to their activity, which requires concentration. Visitors anticipate development necessary to support their activities, but also value the ambiance of a natural setting. As with skiers and snowboarders, surroundings are a factor in the satisfaction and enjoyment of the activity. This viewing group, which is relatively small and limited to people who are using the golf course, would have moderate sensitivity to visual change on the project site.

##### Bicyclists, Pedestrians, and Recreationists

Bicyclists, pedestrians, and recreationists traveling the paved Class I trail through the Valley could be visitors staying in the Valley, residents, or recreationists accessing the trail from the Truckee River Trail. Bicyclists, pedestrians, and recreationists entering the Valley would have panoramic scenic views from the east end of the meadow that would change with their location as they travel the trail. The main Village area would

become more visible as they move to the west. The trail bypasses the East Parcel to the south of the park, therefore no views of the East Parcel would be provided from the trail. This viewing group would have expectations of experiencing a recreational activity in scenic surroundings, but would also have expectations of some modification of the environment associated with the resort setting. Bicyclists, pedestrians, and recreationists would be focused on their physical activity, but would have the opportunity to stop to enjoy the views. Sensitivity would be moderately high. This viewing group is relatively small, but the experience is available to the public at large.

### **Trail Users**

Hikers traveling on the Granite Chief Trail, which has a trailhead on the north side of the Valley, would have limited views of the Valley floor due to terrain and vegetation. Hikers traveling on the Five Lakes Trail and the Western States Trail, with trailheads off of SR 89 and in Alpine Meadows area, respectively, may have more panoramic views of Squaw Valley from the peaks and ridges on the south side of the Valley. Hikers moving through the natural environment have high awareness of surroundings and have expectations of experiencing a recreational activity in scenic surroundings. Hikers move through the environment at a walking pace and would have prolonged views of the surrounding area. Sensitivity would be moderately high. This viewing group is relatively small, but the experience is available to the public at large.

### **Day-use Visitors**

Other visitors coming to Squaw Valley for scenic enjoyment and hiking would see the project site at the west end of the Valley from Squaw Valley Road, from the slopes above the Valley, or from resort and restaurant areas. Visitors would have prolonged views of the project site and would be visiting with the expectation of spending time in scenic surroundings within the context of a resort. These visitors would have moderately high sensitivity to visual environment. These views would be available to the public at large.

### **Employees**

Resort and ski area employees have a high degree of familiarity with the scenic environment. This group would be focused primarily on work tasks, but may pause to appreciate views. These groups are considered to have moderate sensitivity to visual change.

### **East Parcel**

All visitors and residents entering Squaw Valley pass by the East Parcel on Squaw Valley Road. Viewer expectations include anticipation of recreational experiences within the Valley, but viewers traveling on Squaw Valley Road are mainly focused on driving and reaching their destination at a residence, resort, or trailhead. Residents would be more sensitive to visual change than occasional visitors. Therefore, this group would have average to moderate sensitivity to the visual environment in the vicinity of the East Parcel.

## **8.2 REGULATORY SETTING**

### **8.2.1 Federal**

The proposed project is on privately held lands. There are no federal laws or regulations addressing visual resources that are relevant to the project.

### **8.2.2 State**

#### **CALIFORNIA SCENIC HIGHWAY PROGRAM**

California's Scenic Highway Program was created by the California Legislature in 1963 and is managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The goal of this program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would affect the aesthetic value of the land adjacent to

highways. A highway may be designated “scenic” depending on how much of the natural landscape travelers can see, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on travelers’ enjoyment of the view (Caltrans 2011).

The Program includes a list of highways eligible to become, or designated as, official scenic highways; and includes a process for the designation of official State or County Scenic Highways. SR 89, which runs parallel to the Truckee River east of the project site, is an “Eligible” route under the Scenic Highway Program (Caltrans 2011). The East Parcel and main Village area are not visible from this route.

## **CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION BUILDING ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS FOR OUTDOOR LIGHTING**

Title 24, Parts 1 and 6, Building Energy Efficiency Standards (Standards), adopted by the California Energy Commission on November 5, 2003 includes requirements for outdoor lighting. These standards are updated periodically. The last update took effect in July of 2014. These requirements vary according to which “Lighting Zone” in which the equipment is located. The Standards contain lighting power allowances for newly installed equipment and specific alterations that are dependent on which Lighting Zone the project is located. Existing outdoor lighting systems are not required to meet these lighting power allowances. However, alterations that increase the connected load, or replace more than 50 percent of the existing luminaires for each outdoor lighting application that is regulated by the Standards must meet the lighting power allowances for newly installed equipment.

The allowed lighting power is based on the brightness of existing lighting in the surrounding area. This is because the eyes adapt to darker surrounding conditions, and less light is needed to properly see; when the surrounding conditions get brighter, more light is needed to see. Providing greater power than is needed potentially leads to debilitating glare, and to an increasing spiral of brightness as over-bright projects become the surrounding conditions for future projects causing future projects to unnecessarily consume energy and contribute to light pollution.

The Energy Commission defines the boundaries of Lighting Zones based on U.S. Census Bureau boundaries for urban and rural areas as well as the legal boundaries of wilderness and park areas. The smallest amount of power is allowed in Lighting Zone 1 and increasingly more power is allowed in Lighting Zones 2, 3, and 4.

By default, government designated parks, recreation areas and wildlife preserves are Lighting Zone 1; rural areas are Lighting Zone 2; and urban areas are Lighting Zone 3. Lighting Zone 4 is a special use district that may be adopted by a local government.

### **8.2.3 Local**

#### **PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN**

The relevant policies of the *Placer County General Plan* (2013) with respect to visual resources are listed below.

#### **Visual and Scenic Resources**

- ▲ **Policy 1.K.1.** The County shall require that new development in scenic areas (e.g., river canyons, lake watersheds, scenic highway corridors, ridgelines and steep slopes) is planned and designed in a manner which employs design, construction, and maintenance techniques that:
  - a. Avoids locating structures along ridgelines and steep slopes;
  - b. Incorporates design and screening measures to minimize the visibility of structures and graded areas;
  - c. Maintains the character and visual quality of the area.

- ▲ **Policy 1.K.2.** The County shall require that new development in scenic areas be designed to utilize natural landforms and vegetation for screening structures, access roads, building foundations, and cut and fill slopes.
- ▲ **Policy 1.K.3.** The County shall require that new development in rural areas incorporates landscaping that provides a transition between the vegetation in developed areas and adjacent open space or undeveloped areas.
- ▲ **Policy 1.K.4.** The County shall require that new development incorporates sound soil conservation practices and minimizes land alterations. Land alterations should comply with the following guidelines:
  - a. Limit cuts and fills;
  - b. Limit grading to the smallest practical area of land;
  - c. Limit land exposure to the shortest practical amount of time;
  - d. Replant graded areas to ensure establishment of plant cover before the next rainy season; and
  - e. Create grading contours that blend with the natural contours on site or with contours on property immediately adjacent to the area of development; and
  - f. Provide and maintain site-specific construction Best Management Practices (BMPs).
- ▲ **Policy 1.K.5.** The County shall require that new roads, parking, and utilities be designed to minimize visual impacts. Unless limited by geological or engineering constraints, utilities should be installed underground and roadways and parking areas should be designed to fit the natural terrain.
- ▲ **Policy 1.K.6.** The County shall require that new development on hillsides employ design, construction, and maintenance techniques that:
  - a. Ensure that development near or on portions of hillsides do not cause or worsen natural hazards such as erosion, sedimentation, fire, or water quality concerns;
  - b. Include erosion and sediment control measures including temporary vegetation sufficient to stabilize disturbed areas;
  - c. Minimize risk to life and property from slope failure, landslides, and flooding; and,
  - d. Maintain the character and visual quality of the hillside.

## Scenic Routes

- ▲ **Policy 1.L.2.** The County shall use scenic routes to link major points of historical and cultural interest and recreational activity within the County.
- ▲ **Policy 1.L.3.** The County shall protect and enhance scenic corridors through such means as design review, sign control, undergrounding utilities, scenic setbacks, density limitations, planned unit developments, grading and tree removal standards, open space easements, and land conservation contracts.
- ▲ **Policy 1.L.8.** The County shall include aesthetic design considerations in road construction, reconstruction, or maintenance for all scenic routes under County jurisdiction.

## SQUAW VALLEY GENERAL PLAN AND LAND USE ORDINANCE

The *Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance* (SVGPLUO, Placer County 1983) is a combined community plan and implementing document that was adopted in 1983 and last amended in 1994. The policies, objectives, recommendations, and standards contained in the SVGPLUO are intended to guide the development of Squaw Valley during the life of the SVGPLUO.

### Purposes, Principles, and Goals of the 1983 Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance

“It is the purpose of the 1983 SVGPLUO to establish a planning framework to ensure that Squaw Valley is developed into a top quality, year-round, destination resort. The Plan area shall have the capacity to serve and house the optimum number of tourists, visitors, and residents set forth in this Plan without adversely impacting [sic] the unique aesthetic and environmental assets of Squaw Valley.”

#### G. Visual Analysis

The SVGPLUO notes that the visual characteristics of the plan area can be divided into two categories of equal importance: natural features and man-made features.

The natural features are primarily the mountain slopes, peaks, the meadow and adjoining area, and the water courses. The SVGPLUO states that the “mountainous slopes, particularly those visible from the commercial village, Squaw Valley Road, and the single-family home subdivision along the north side of Squaw Valley Road, must be carefully managed to preserve their general forested appearance. Development should not be visually dominant in any area outside the commercial core.” The analysis notes that transition zones between two distinct landforms or visual features are important to preserve; these transition zones include meadow edges where forested slopes meet the Valley floor and the transition area between stream and upland zones.

The Squaw Valley meadow is defined in the SVGPLUO on the basis of its visual and geographic characteristics. In general, the SVGPLUO states that the meadow should be retained in a natural condition with activity and development limited to uses which presently exist in the area. Disturbed portions of Squaw Creek should be rehabilitated in the trapezoidal channel north of the ski resort parking lot. Also stated is the need for existing aesthetic problems such as poor design, overhead utilities, and poorly designed signs to be overcome and the visual/aesthetic quality of the Valley to be continually upgraded with new construction activities. No further encroachments of buildings, impervious surfaces, or other development activity should occur on lands designated as “Conservation Preserve.”

The SVGPLUO recognizes the need to develop a coordinated signage program in the Valley, consistent with the goal of upgrading the overall visual and aesthetic quality, and also contains a basic concept of developing a pedestrian oriented village core, which combines commercial and tourist-residential uses.

#### H. Scenic Highways page 20

The SVGPLUO incorporates the protections afforded to scenic routes in the *Placer County General Plan*, as described above. SR 89 and Squaw Valley Road were both designated as scenic roadways in the 1977 *Placer County General Plan Scenic Highway Element*.

### Height Restrictions

The SVGPLUO contains the following height restrictions for these land use districts that apply to the project:

- ▲ Section 137.10. The maximum permitted height within the Forest Recreation and Conservation Preserve districts shall be 30 feet.
- ▲ Section 137.12. The maximum average height within the High Density Residential, Heavy Commercial, and Entrance Commercial shall not exceed 35 feet.

- ▲ Section 220.16. There will be no specific height limitations in this [Village Commercial] district, but height limits shall be set for particular developments through the design review process where other developed or developable parcels are affected by a proposed building.

## 8.3 IMPACTS

### 8.3.1 Significance Criteria

Based on the Placer County CEQA checklist and Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would result in a potentially significant impact on visual resources if it would:

- ▲ have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- ▲ substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway;
- ▲ substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings;
- ▲ create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area; or
- ▲ create additional shadowing on existing structures or facilities during a substantial portion of the day.

### 8.3.2 Methods and Assumptions

#### POLICIES PROPOSED IN THE SPECIFIC PLAN THAT COULD AFFECT PROJECT IMPACTS

The following policies from *The Village at Squaw Valley Specific Plan* (Squaw Valley Real Estate, LLC 2015) are applicable to the evaluation of visual resources effects:

##### Open Space

- ▲ **Policy OS-3:** Extend the natural mountain landscape into the Village by requiring the use of native or naturalized vegetation along pedestrian corridors, within gathering areas and for landscape buffers and green spaces.
- ▲ **Policy OS-5:** Take advantage of the mountain frontage for primary gathering spaces and organize the pedestrian network to converge at these areas.
- ▲ **Policy OS-7:** Integrate landscape corridors throughout each neighborhood to preserve mountain views, provide transition zones to surrounding natural areas, and to create visual buffers.

##### Scenic Resources

- ▲ **Policy SR-1:** Provide visual access to the principal views of the mountain peaks and hillsides to reinforce the connection of the Village to the mountain environment.
- ▲ **Policy SR-2:** Protect and enhance scenic corridors through such means as sign control, undergrounding utilities, scenic setbacks, and open space easements.
- ▲ **Policy SR-3:** Provide for landscaping and/or landscaped mounding where desirable to maintain scenic qualities and screen unsightly views.

- ▲ **Policy SR-4:** Encourage the development of trails and bike paths along scenic routes.
- ▲ **Policy SR-5:** New lighting shall be designed to limit glare and light pollution.

## IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

This visual impact analysis is based on field observations, a review of site plans and aerial photographs, photographs of the project site, and computer simulations of the completed development. Simulations of development of the main Village area were created by Field of Vision, a firm retained as part of the EIR team. Simulations of the East Parcel were created by Soft Mirage, under contract to the project applicant. The EIR team reviewed the simulations, including comparing them to the site plan, to ensure they were representative of the expected views of development on the site.

Analysis of the project's visual impacts is based on evaluation of the changes to the existing visual resources that would result from project implementation. In determining the extent and implications of the visual changes, consideration was given to:

- ▲ existing visual qualities of the affected environment and specific changes in the visual character and qualities of the affected environment;
- ▲ the visual context of the affected environment;
- ▲ the extent to which the affected environment contains places or features that provide unique visual experiences or that have been designated in plans and policies for protection or special consideration; and
- ▲ the sensitivity of viewers, access of viewers, their activities, and the extent to which these activities are related to the aesthetic qualities affected by the project-related changes.

The analysis uses photo simulations of the proposed project for the 12 representative views of the project site. The location of the viewpoints used for simulations is shown in Exhibits 8-7 and 8-8. The existing conditions photographs paired with the simulations showing the proposed project are provided in Exhibits 8-9 through 8-20.

Photograph (photo) locations for the simulations were selected in coordination with Placer County staff to express representative viewpoints of the proposed project from a variety of locations. Photos to be used as the basis for the simulations were taken with the location recorded using maps, aerial photos, and GPS. Characteristics of the digital camera used, such as focal length and lens type, were also recorded for each photo. The digital photos were entered into simulation modelling software. Electronic versions of engineering drawings provided by the project applicant were also entered into the software to create an electronic three-dimensional (3D) rendering of the project area. The photos were then adjusted (e.g., focal length, focal point) so that locations of multiple existing features in the photo (e.g., buildings, road centerlines, ski lift poles, mountain topography) matched the locations of these existing facilities in the engineering drawings. This calibration ensures that the photo and 3D rendering are properly aligned with, and reflective of, actual conditions. Once the photo was calibrated, proposed project facilities were incorporated into the 3D model. Locations of project facilities and post project ground elevations and topography were expressed in the engineering drawings and the 3D structure of the facilities was provided by the applicant in the form of 3D renderings of each building. Each building rendering was cross-checked for accuracy (e.g., proper height and other dimensions) before being accepted in the overall 3D model. As the overall model of the project area was developed, the 3D building renderings were provided "surfacing" such as color, stone and wood elements, and shading and shadow, and landscaping elements (e.g., trees, groundcover) were added reflective of general landscaping plans provided by the applicant. Buildings, trees, and other existing features that would be removed by the proposed project were removed from the 3D model and from the source image/photo used for the simulation. The final simulations reflect a simulated rendering of the proposed project as it would be expected to be seen by an observer standing in the location where the

source photo was taken. The simulations are based on full buildout of the plan. Trees and other landscaping are depicted after approximately 10 to 20 years of growth.

### 8.3.3 Issues or Potential Impacts Not Discussed Further

All visual resource issues addressed in the significance criteria are evaluated below.

### 8.3.4 Impact Analysis

#### Impact 8-1: Adverse effect on a scenic vista.

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The major scenic attribute of the west end of the Valley is the resort setting with the backdrop of mountain slopes and peaks. On-going construction activities, partially constructed buildings, and equipment would detract from the scenic vistas of the west end of the Valley. This would be a **significant** impact during construction.

The project would add structures with mountain-village type architecture to an area that is largely paved and developed, and is adjacent to other resort buildings (main Village area). The increase in number and size of structures at the main Village area would increase the visibility of the built environment and would obscure the lower slopes on the mountain. However, the mountain peaks surrounding the resort would remain the primary point of visual interest and would continue to dominate the west end of the Valley. The increased prominence of structures would also be offset by the implementation of the VSVSP design guidelines, which would result in a unified architectural style and landscaping that would screen the lower portions of the new structures. Therefore, the proposed project would not substantially detract from or degrade scenic vistas. This impact would be **less than significant** to occasional visitors to the Valley, which constitute the majority of viewers. However, long-term residents have experienced a gradual change in visual conditions, from more natural conditions to more built up, with modifications such as the Resort at Squaw Creek and the IntraWest development altering the viewshed. Because the project would obstruct some views of the lower slopes and continue a long-term development trend within an overall highly scenic area, the impact would be **significant** to permanent residents of the Valley.

The quality of views in the vicinity of the East Parcel is considered average within the context of the surrounding forested landscape and nearby (across the street) development, and views that incorporate this site do not present distinctive features that provide a scenic vista. Therefore, the proposed development on the East Parcel would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista. The impact to residents and occasional visitors during construction and operation would be **less than significant**.

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## CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

The construction period for the project would be lengthy, an estimated 25 years. During this time period, construction equipment including cranes, haul trucks, and excavators; materials stockpiles; partially constructed buildings; and environmental protection measures, such as runoff control, would be visible on the project site. Construction could occur concurrently at different locations on the project site; residents and visitors might view a number of construction projects in various stages of development at any one time. Construction activities, materials, and equipment would be commonly visible to visitors to the Valley, the resort area adjacent to the site, nearby resort areas, and to residents. During the summer, surface parking lots would be used for staging and stockpile areas. The winter season would have the least outdoor construction activity, but partially completed structures and equipment and materials stored on the site would be visible.

The major scenic attribute of the west end of the Valley is the resort setting with a backdrop of mountain slopes and peaks. On-going construction activities, partially constructed buildings, and equipment would detract from the scenic vistas of the west end of the Valley by reducing intactness of views, introducing structural elements that detract from the resort setting, and interrupting views of the surrounding slopes and peaks. The changes to the visual resources would result in a substantial adverse effect on the scenic vistas provided from various viewpoints in the project vicinity. Taking into consideration that the scenic vistas are readily accessible to the public, that the scenic vistas are observed by a large number of viewers, and that the viewer sensitivity to alterations to the scenic vistas are high, this impact would be **significant**.

### East Parcel

Construction activities on the East Parcel would be visible to anyone entering Olympic Valley on Squaw Valley Road. The quality of views in the vicinity of the East Parcel, however, is considered average within the context of the surrounding forested landscape, and views that incorporate this site do not present distinctive features that provide a scenic vista. Construction would also be underway for a shorter timeframe and buildings and structures would not exceed 2 or 3 stories. Therefore, construction activities would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista in this location and the impact here would be **less than significant**.

## OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

Scenic vistas of the west end of Squaw Valley, of which the project site is a part, are visible primarily from the area east of the project site, from Squaw Valley Road, and from the eastern edge of the meadow; viewers would be visitors at the Resort at Squaw Creek, golfers or cross country skiers on the golf course, motorists traveling west on Squaw Valley Road, or bicyclists traveling west on the bike path.

The major scenic attribute of the west end of the Valley is the resort setting with a backdrop of mountain slopes and peaks. The natural terrain dominates the view, and as a consequence, the structures in the near foreground are not visually prominent. Under current conditions, structures located in and near the parking lot (Far East Center, sheds), the parking lots' expanse of asphalt and vehicles, and low lying structures near the base of the slopes (Red Wolf timeshare, snow making building, lift maintenance building) reduce the intactness of the view; however, the backdrop of mountains dominates and unifies the elements in the view, creating distinctive and memorable views (Exhibit 8-11, Viewpoint 3; Exhibit 8-12, Viewpoint 4; Exhibit 8-13, Viewpoint 5; and Exhibit 8-14, Viewpoint 6). In the winter, the scenic qualities of the area are enhanced by the contrast of snow with forest and rock faces, and intrusive elements such as sheds and maintenance facilities on the south side of the Valley and are less prominent than in the summer, spring, and fall due to snow coverage and shadows cast by the mountains on that side of the Valley (see Impact 8-4).

The project would replace the parking lots and existing scattered structures with multi-story condominiums/hotels and parking garages, with some surface parking to remain. This would result in increased prominence of structures in foreground views from Squaw Valley Road and areas to the east (meadow and golf course). Foreground views along Squaw Valley Road of the project site would include the parking structures with taller condominium and hotel structures behind. Refer to Exhibit 8-11, Viewpoint 3, and Exhibit 8-12, Viewpoint 4.

As shown in simulated views for Viewpoints 4 and 6 in Exhibits 8-12 and 8-14, views from the east of the project site would be altered by the increased numbers of structures that would be taller and closer to the viewer than the existing Intrawest Village structures. The Intrawest Village condominiums would be partially blocked from view by the new condominium/hotel structures and by the Mountain Adventure Camp (structure 8A in Exhibit 3-5, in Chapter 3, "Project Description"). Facilities and existing buildings at the base of the southern slope would also be blocked by the project, including the snow making facilities, lift service facilities and Red Wolf Timeshare. The new structures would have design and exterior treatments based on the proposed VSVSP Development Standards and Design Guidelines (DSDG), which could include wood, stucco, colored concrete, and stone exteriors (Squaw Valley Real Estate, LLC 2015). Exterior colors would be

selected to blend with the surrounding mountains. The new structures would be similar in appearance to nearby existing Intrawest Village structures.

The increase in number and size of structures on the project site would increase the visibility of the built environment in foreground views and would obscure the lower slopes on the mountain. The visual experience would likely be different for residents of the area who experience these views on a nearly daily basis, compared to visitors who experience these views only occasionally (and many who are visiting Squaw Valley would have little or no past context to compare the views to). This is a small part of the viewshed and the mountain peaks surrounding the resort would remain the primary point of visual interest and would continue to dominate the west end of the Valley. The increased prominence of structures in the foreground would also be offset by the implementation of the VSVSP DSDG, which would result in a unified architectural style for all structures in the views, replacing or blocking from view current structures that lack architectural unity and detract from existing views. In addition, the VSVSP DSDG require landscaping as part of the Squaw Creek restoration, and also require landscaping through the main Village area to screen the lower portions of structures. Visitors to the project would experience a visually unified view of the scenic vista, and the change would not be substantial compared to current views for this user group.

However, the context is different for the visitor user group, comprised of people occasionally visiting the site because it is a resort, than for permanent residents. The project would intensify development within an area that has transitioned over the past 50+ years from a relatively natural setting with modest development, to a setting increasingly dominated by manmade structures, including the visually dominant Resort at Squaw Creek and the IntraWest development (although the IntraWest development includes village-type architecture that is visually more compatible with a mountain setting). While occasional visitors may not have the same point of reference for visual change—they will experience the project as it looks when they see it—permanent residents would experience the visual change more acutely. Although the buildings would be consistent with the mountain resort design aesthetic, some residents would experience view blockages from various vantage points, such as the lower slope of the mountains as seen from the meadow/golf course area. In addition, some units in existing timeshare projects, such as Red Wolf Lodge and Olympic Village Inn, and hotel condominium projects such as the Squaw Valley Lodge and the Intrawest Village, would experience altered views or partially blocked views. The extent to which these changes are substantial is subjective, and is based on individual viewers. However, because this is debatable and subjective, this DEIR concludes that the impact is significant to permanent residents of the area and to part-time residents of adjacent timeshare and hotel condominium projects.

The project is anticipated to include a new 0.7 million gallon water storage tank located adjacent to an existing 1.0 million gallon tank just north of and above the main Village area (see Exhibit 3-3 in Chapter 3, “Project Description”). The tank would be screened by the existing tank and vegetation on the mountain slope and would not detract from scenic vistas in the area. The project would also include the addition of utility infrastructure along Squaw Valley Road; this new infrastructure would be undergrounded in accordance with VSVSP policies and, thus, would not be visible once installed.

The scenic vistas of the west end of the Valley are readily accessible to the public, are observed by a large number of viewers, and viewer sensitivity to alterations to the scenic resources is high. However, given the project would largely replace a paved area, would implement architectural and landscape design guidelines that result in unified architectural style and landscape screening of the new structures, would modify only part of the viewshed, and would retain the most dominating scenic elements, this impact would be **less than significant** to visitors to the Valley. Because some views of the lower slopes would be obstructed, and because the project would result in a continuation of long-term development trend within an overall highly scenic area, the impact would be **significant** to permanent residents of the Valley.

### East Parcel

Development on the East Parcel would be visible to anyone entering the Olympic Valley on Squaw Valley Road. The quality of views in the vicinity of the East Parcel, however, is considered average within the context of the surrounding forested landscape, and views that incorporate this site do not present distinctive

features that provide a scenic vista. Therefore, the proposed development on the East Parcel would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista in this location. This impact would be **less than significant**.

### **Mitigation Measure 8-1: Install screening to reduce the visual effects of construction.**

Screening fences with opaque or semi-opaque mesh screening or similar shall be strategically employed to reduce the visual effects of construction on adjacent residential and resort areas. Prior to approval of Improvement Plans or Building Permits for each phase of construction, a screening plan shall be approved by the Placer County Planning Services Division. The screening plan shall be implemented concurrent with initial ground-disturbing phases of construction and maintained through completion of exterior construction phases for buildings. The screening plan shall include details to specify construction equipment staging areas and materials storage areas. Construction staging and materials storage areas shall be located away from Squaw Valley Road and adjacent existing resort facilities to the extent feasible.

#### **Significance after Mitigation**

No mitigation measures are available that would reduce the project's construction impact on scenic vistas in the main Village area to a less-than significant level. Although screening may lessen the intrusiveness of construction, the activity would still have a considerable effect on the intactness of the view. Therefore, Impact 8-1 would remain **significant and unavoidable** during construction.

The project would be constructed in an area that is currently disturbed. The project employs substantial design guidelines that would result in a unified design consistent with a mountain setting for a resort project. The overall appearance would be attractive, for a built environment, and it would largely replace a parking lot. This would not obviate the project's contribution to blocking the scenic vistas currently available to year-round and seasonal residents of Olympic Valley, and elimination of the structures with potential to affect scenic vistas would not be feasible, given the relatively small size of the project site and the intensity of the proposed development. Conversely, increasing the height of structures on other areas of the site may restore some views from these existing buildings, but would result in visual tradeoffs, and would likely result in a development appearance that is too intensive for the mountain setting. No mitigation measures are available that would further reduce scenic vista impacts to year-round residents of the Valley or to part-time residents of adjacent timeshare and hotel condominium projects to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, Impact 8-1 would remain **significant and unavoidable** to residents during project operation.

### **Impact 8-2: Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.**

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While the project site is largely developed (main Village area) and/or modified from natural conditions (East Parcel), construction activity including ground disturbance, construction material staging areas, partially constructed buildings, and construction equipment would alter the existing visual character of these areas. This impact would be **potentially significant** during construction.

The visual character of the project site is generally defined by existing resort development, paved parking lots, and smaller ancillary structures. The project would increase the number and size of structures on the project site and the built environment would become a more dominant aspect of the visual character of the site. This impact would be **potentially significant** during project operation.

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The character of the main Village area is defined by existing resort structures of various styles. Maintenance and infrastructure buildings share the viewscape with lodging and resort-oriented gathering places. There is a dispersed land use pattern, and buildings are connected by ample asphalt parking and roadways. The visual character of adjacent areas to the west is also dominated by the built environment (resort structures, support facilities, roadways, parking lots, and residential development). The height of adjacent existing Intrawest Village structures varies between approximately 60 and 70 feet.

The area surrounding the developed resort consists of modified natural areas (golf course, channelized stream, cleared ski runs), and relatively undisturbed or minimally altered natural areas (meadow with meandering stream, forested mountain slopes, and mountain peaks). Adjacent natural features contrast sharply with the expansive paved areas, maintenance and service structures of various architectural styles, multi-story hotel/condo structures, and ski resort facilities located at the base of the ski slopes.

The visual quality of the main Village area ranges from average to high, depending on viewing location. The quality of views from Intrawest Village, residential areas on the north side of the Valley and from Squaw Valley Road in the spring and summer are average to moderately low. This is due to the lack of unity in the built environment and presence of elements, such as parking lots and utility lines, in the foreground of views that detract from the natural elements of the landscape.

Views of the main Village area from Squaw Valley Road in the winter, by contrast, are considered moderately high quality because the snow cover diminishes the prominence of the buildings, utilities, and other infrastructure while highlighting the surrounding mountains. Moderately high quality views of the main Village area are also afforded from the Olympic Village Inn at the northwest end of the Valley because trees in the foreground of views minimize the prominence of structures in the view. The quality of views from the meadow and golf course east of the project site is moderately high in summer, spring, and fall. Parking structures, maintenance buildings, and other ski area infrastructure detract from the quality of the natural view of meadow and mountains. In the winter, when snow cover and winter shadow reduce the dominance of these elements, the views of the main Village area from the Resort at Squaw Creek, meadow, and golf course are high quality.

The East Parcel is partially graded and has the appearance of a semi-natural, utilitarian area; it is used for snow storage, and is adjacent to Squaw Valley Road, but appears surrounded by forest. The quality of the view is average, due largely to the existing ground disturbance.

## CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

As noted above in Impact 8-1, the construction period for the project would be lengthy and visual effects of different construction stages would be seen on various portions of the site concurrently. While the project site is largely developed, construction activity including ground disturbance, construction material staging areas, partially constructed buildings, and construction equipment would alter the visual character of the project site and would not be consistent with its resort character. Construction would also lower the visual quality of views of the site and surrounding area. Taking in to consideration that the views of the project site are readily accessible to the public and are observed by a large number of viewers, and that the viewer sensitivity to alterations to the scenic resources is average to moderately high, this impact would be **potentially significant**.

### East Parcel

Construction activities would alter the appearance of the East Parcel with the presence of construction equipment, excavations, and construction materials. While the visual character of the site is modified from natural conditions, it offers relatively uninterrupted views of the surrounding forested areas to the north and of forested slopes and peaks in the middleground and background. Under construction conditions, the visual character would be substantially changed by construction equipment and activity in the foreground. This would be in sharp contrast with the visual character of the surrounding forested area. The largest viewing groups would be visitors, residents and employees driving past the site who would have expectations of forested views across the site. Viewing time for this group would be of short duration, but views would be experienced frequently by those traveling the road on a regular basis. Taking into consideration that the views of the East Parcel are commonly viewed by the public, that the site is observed by large numbers of people, and that viewer concern and sensitivity to alterations to the scenic resources in this location as a result of construction activities is considered average to moderately high, this impact would be **potentially significant**.

## OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

The project would increase the number and size of structures on the project site, which has existing paving and scattered smaller structures, and would increase the dominance of the built environment on the project site. Presently, the structures on the project site lack unity and do not include distinctive or harmonious features. The project would also include a 0.7 million gallon water storage tank just north of and above the main Village area and new, underground utility infrastructure along Squaw Valley Road. Existing overhead power lines on Squaw Valley Road fronting the East Parcel and the main Village area would be undergrounded, and existing overhead lines northwest of the proposed Village development would be undergrounded or relocated concurrent with construction of project improvements.

While in keeping with the resort character of the site, the project could affect the character of the main Village area by increasing the density and height of buildings. The visual quality of the main Village area would be improved by undergrounding utilities that currently detract from views. However, development that includes buildings, landscaping, and signs that are incongruous with the natural setting and inconsistent in design could reduce the quality of views.

The quality of views from Intrawest Village, residential areas on the north side of the Valley, and from Squaw Valley Road in the spring and summer would remain average to moderately low. Detracting elements of the existing environment (e.g., utilities) would be removed from the foreground of views, but buildings would disrupt the unity of views (Exhibits 8-9, 8-10, 8-12, 8-17, and 8-19). In some cases (i.e., from Intrawest Village) views of the distant mountain peaks may be largely blocked (Exhibits 8-17 and 8-19).

Views of the main Village area from Squaw Valley Road in the winter would remain moderately high quality because the snow cover would diminish the prominence of buildings, utilities, and other infrastructure while highlighting the surrounding mountains, and the landscaped setback would obscure buildings in the foreground (Exhibits 8-11 and 8-16). Views of the main Village area from the Olympic Village Inn would be moderately low to moderately high quality. Although the trees that largely block the foreground views would remain, proposed buildings would be more dominant in the viewshed and would partially obscure views of the mountains (Exhibit 8-19).

Views of the main Village area from the Resort at Squaw Creek, meadow, and golf course would remain moderately high quality in the summer, spring, and fall, and high quality in the winter. Buildings would be more dominant in the view, but would appear at the base of the mountain, in a natural break in the landscape features, and would be consistent with the character of the developed environment in the immediate foreground (Exhibit 8-14).

Without design review and adherence to guidelines, additional development on the project site could result in more incongruous development with the potential to degrade the visual character of the project site or its surroundings. Although the proposed development would be consistent with the character of the existing resort development, because views of the site from adjacent resort and residential areas are of average to high quality and discordant architectural styles could degrade the character of the site, this impact would be **potentially significant**.

### East Parcel

Commercial buildings and signage along the Squaw Valley Road frontage would reduce visual quality by partially blocking views of forested areas to the north; however, distant views of forested hill sides would partially retain the character of the site and surroundings (see Exhibit 8-20, Viewpoint 12). The visual character of the East Parcel development would be similar to existing visual character of the commercial and office development on the south side of Squaw Valley Road that consists of visitor-serving commercial (hotel, the SVPSD offices, and Fire Station 21). Visitors, residents, and employees driving past the site would have views that incorporate commercial structures on the south and north side of the road with forested views in

the background. The project would have a **potentially significant** impact on visual character and quality of the East Parcel.

### **Mitigation Measure 8-2a: Implement Mitigation Measure 8-1.**

The project applicant shall implement Mitigation Measure 8-1, which requires the installation of screening to reduce the visual effects of construction.

### **Mitigation Measure 8-2b: Comply with plan area development standards and obtain Design Review approval.**

Prior to submittal of Improvement Plans or Building Permits, the project applicant shall obtain Design Review approval from the Placer County Design/Site Review Committee (D/SRC). All project phases must be compatible with the Plan Area Development Standards prescribed in Appendix B of the VSVSP. Review and approval by the County shall apply to such project components as: colors, materials, and textures of all structures; landscaping; signs; exterior lighting; and entry features.

#### **Significance after Mitigation**

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 8-2a would reduce the impacts of construction on visual resources; however, no mitigation measures are available that would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level because elements of construction that would detract from the unity of the view, including the presence of construction equipment in the quantity necessary to complete the planned structures and the unfinished aesthetic of partially-constructed buildings, coupled with the extent of proposed development and the extended development timeframe, are unavoidable. Therefore, this impact would remain **significant and unavoidable** during construction.

The proposed project would be developed using the DSDG (see Appendix B of the Specific Plan). Among the principles contained in the DSDG are:

- ▲ to design buildings and landscapes that reinforce and form the Village pedestrian network;
- ▲ to extend the natural landscape into the Village so that a strong sense of place is established;
- ▲ to maintain scenic view corridors to the surrounding mountain peaks; and
- ▲ to create a varied built fabric that reflects a true mountain Village aesthetic.

The DSDG provides qualitative design intent and allows for flexibility and interpretation so long as the intent of the DSDG is upheld.

The DSDG encourages buildings of varying heights and setbacks from adjacent buildings to support these principles. Implementation of development standards for structures in the Commercial Core on the project site to the immediate east of the Intrawest Village, for example, would result in a structure with variable roof heights between 72 feet and 108 feet with a 15-foot setback from Village East Road (see Appendix B of the Specific Plan). See Exhibit 8-12, Viewpoint 4; Exhibit 8-14, Viewpoint 6; Exhibit 8-17, Viewpoint 9; and Exhibit 8-18, Viewpoint 10, which show the project site from various viewpoints under existing conditions and with simulated views of the proposed project.

The DSDG would address structural form and materials. DSDG guidelines include use of natural or natural-appearing roof materials to blend roofs into the mountain terrain and exterior walls and finishes using materials, finishes, and colors that relate the buildings to the mountain setting. Therefore, development of the project site with similar types of structures would not change the visual character of the site and immediate vicinity.

The project would result in the project site becoming more similar to the character of the adjacent resort area, which would not be a substantial change in visual character. The visual character of the northwest portion of the project site is somewhat natural, being forested and undeveloped, but is immediately adjacent

to existing resort facilities. Therefore development of this area, which is proposed for development with “fractional cabins,” would not substantially alter the character of the site.

The surrounding natural features, including the mountain slopes and peaks, the meadow, and meandering stream, are dominant features that define the visual character and provide high quality visual experiences. These features would remain unchanged by the project.

Taking into consideration that the proposed development would be consistent with the visual character of the adjacent existing resort development and that the proposed project would implement design standards and guidelines that would encourage maintenance of unified architectural styles, the impacts to existing visual quality and character would be **less than significant** with implementation of Mitigation Measure 8-2b.

### **Impact 8-3: Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a scenic highway.**

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Squaw Valley Road is a designated Placer County scenic route and is considered a scenic highway for the purposes of this analysis. The qualities of more distant views of the main Village area from Squaw Valley Road (i.e., views of the resort with an impressive backdrop of mountain slopes and peaks) are moderately high to high. Construction activity and equipment would detract from foreground views from Squaw Valley Road of the scenic vistas (see Impact 8-1). The changes would result in a substantial adverse effect on the scenic vistas provided from Squaw Valley Road during construction. This impact would be **potentially significant** for the main Village area during construction. The visual character of the East Parcel is modified from natural conditions, and construction activity would not alter important scenic resources visible from Squaw Valley Road. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant** for the East Parcel during construction.

Views from Squaw Valley Road of the meadow and surrounding peaks, which are the dominant visual resources in the study area, would not be blocked or altered with project implementation. In the main Village area, addition of structures to the foreground of views that are not consistent with the character of the natural setting and do not have a unified architectural style would have a **potentially significant** impact on the surrounding scenic resources, as viewed from a scenic route, during project operation. Development on the East Parcel would have a **less-than-significant** impact on scenic resources within a scenic route during project operation.

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No designated state scenic highways exist in the project area. SR 89, located 2 miles to the east of the main Village area and 0.25 mile east of the East Parcel, is an eligible state scenic highway (Caltrans 2011), but the project area, including the East Parcel, is not visible from SR 89. Squaw Valley Road is a designated Placer County scenic route and is considered a scenic highway for the purposes of this analysis. The project site, including the East Parcel, is visible from Squaw Valley Road. According to the SVGPLUO, visual analysis and scenic highways descriptions, important scenic resources in the project area would be mountain peaks and ridges, forested slopes, meadows and streams, and the transition zones between these features. These aesthetically important areas are all visible from Squaw Valley Road in the vicinity of the project site.

Additionally, the Far East Center, which is a historic building associated with the 1960 Olympics, can be seen from Squaw Valley Road (see Exhibits 8-11, 8-12, and 8-16). The A-frame, mid-century modern building is surrounded by paved parking and set apart from other structures in the eastern parking lot. Although visible from the scenic route, the structure is not a scenic resource that contributes to the visual quality of the views from the roadway. In fact, the disjointed buildings and associated parking detract from the natural aesthetic of the Valley and surrounding mountains. When considered at close range by the knowledgeable observer, the structure may evoke the feeling of the 1960 Olympics and the historical significance of that event in the context of the overall development in the Valley. However, due to the scale of the structure and the surroundings, the Far East Center may also appear to be an outdated support building that detracts from the visual quality of the overall viewshed as seen from Squaw Valley Road. (Refer to Chapter 7, “Cultural Resources,” for a detailed description of the value of historic structures on the site).

## CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

The project site is largely developed, and views of the project site from Squaw Valley Road are considered moderately low for immediate foreground views of the site (see Exhibit 8-12, Viewpoint 4). These views show the channelized stream, lacking in the aesthetically important transition zone; and meadow edge contrasted against nearby parking areas. Construction activity and equipment would detract from foreground views from Squaw Valley Road of the scenic vistas of the west end of the Valley (see Impact 8-1). The construction disturbance would result in a substantial adverse effect on the views of the site from Squaw Valley Road. This impact would be **potentially significant**.

### East Parcel

The East Parcel is vacant and disturbed, bordered by Squaw Creek on the north. Commercial and residential development is on the south side of Squaw Valley Road across from the East Parcel. The visual character of the site is modified from natural conditions, so construction activity would not alter important scenic resources. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.

## OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

As shown in Exhibit 8-11, Viewpoint 3, and Exhibit 8-12, Viewpoint 4, views from Squaw Valley Road at the eastern portion of the project site would be altered by the increased numbers of structures that would be taller and closer to the viewer than the existing Intrawest Village structures. The increase in number and size of structures on the project site would increase the prominence of the built environment in the foreground of the views from Squaw Valley Road. In addition, the Far East Center, which is a historic building, would be removed. However, views of the meadow and surrounding peaks, which are the dominant visual resources in the study area, would not be blocked or altered. The views from the scenic route of the project site are readily accessible to the public, are observed by a large number of viewers, and viewer sensitivity to alterations to the views is high. Although views of the meadow and mountain peaks would not be altered, the project would have a **potentially significant** impact if new buildings are not designed to present a unified architectural style that is consistent with the natural setting.

### East Parcel

As described above, visual quality of views of the East Parcel from Squaw Valley Road is considered average within the context of the surrounding forested landscape that has been modified with commercial and residential development. The East Parcel has been cleared of vegetation and, with implementation of the project, the East Parcel would be developed with commercial buildings along the highway frontage that would include signage. Visitors, residents, and employees driving past the site would not have expectations of undisturbed forested views because residential and commercial development is scattered along the road, between the SR 89 and the East Parcel. Taking into consideration that visual quality of the views of the East Parcel are average and are commonly viewed by the public, that the site is observed by large numbers of people, and that viewer concern and sensitivity to alterations to the scenic resources in this location is considered average, this impact would be **less than significant**.

### Mitigation Measure 8-3: Implement Mitigation Measures 8-1 and 8-2b.

The project applicant shall implement Mitigation Measures 8-1 and 8-2b, which require the installation of screening to reduce the visual effects of construction and adherence to the VSVSP design guidelines, respectively.

#### Significance after Mitigation

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 8-3 would reduce the impact to visual resources as viewed from Squaw Valley Road due to construction; however, no mitigation measures are available that would reduce

this impact to a less-than-significant level because construction processes are inherently inconsistent with a natural, serene environment. Therefore, this impact would remain **significant and unavoidable** during construction.

With respect to project operation, the views of the project site from Squaw Valley Road, a Placer County-designated scenic route, are readily accessible to the public, are observed by a large number of viewers, and viewer sensitivity to alterations to the views is high. The VSVSP design guidelines require landscaping as part of the Squaw Creek restoration, and landscaping through the main Village area to screen the lower portions of structures (Exhibit 8-14, Viewpoint 6 and Exhibit 8-20, Viewpoint 12). With implementation of architectural and landscape design guidelines that result in unified architectural style, and landscape screening of the new structures, as described in Mitigation Measure 8-2b, this impact would be **less than significant**.

#### **Impact 8-4: Create additional shadowing on existing structures or outdoor public gathering areas during a substantial portion of the day.**

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The increased density of structures and increased height of structures would have the potential to increase shadows on public outdoor gathering areas, especially in the winter when the sun is at a low angle. However, because the shadow effect from the mountain to the south of the project site already covers much of the project site in the winter, the seasonal changes to shadowing conditions on adjacent public gathering places would not be worsened by the project. The project's impacts on adjacent properties due to shadowing would, therefore, be **less than significant**.

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Existing resort facilities, including Squaw Valley Lodge, Olympic Village Inn, Red Wolf Lodge, and the Village at Squaw Valley have developed formal, outdoor gathering areas. Other potential outdoor gathering areas include the ski lifts at the base of the mountain and the existing parking lots. After implementation of the project, Squaw Creek and the associated recreational amenities would serve as an additional public gathering area. Sunlight and shadow conditions are an important factor in defining the visual character of these outdoor spaces. The increased density and height of structures that would result from project implementation would have the potential to increase shadows on existing outdoor gathering areas that are adjacent to the project. This effect is especially important in the winter when the sun is at a low angle and when resort visitors would want to gather in outdoor spaces that have sun exposure. To demonstrate the effects of the project on existing gathering areas, shadow simulations of the longest and shortest days of the year (summer and winter solstices) and the equinox (equal daylight/dark hours in spring and fall) were developed (see Appendix F). Exhibit 8-21 shows winter conditions at noon on December 21, the shortest day of the year, when the sun travels the lowest along the horizon and shadows are the longest.

The proposed Village Commercial Core would be east of the existing Village at Squaw Valley and the proposed Village Commercial Neighborhood would be constructed to the east, south, and west of the existing Olympic Village Inn. As discussed below, the proposed Village Commercial Core would affect the southeast corner of the easternmost existing Intrawest building and the adjacent parking and circulation area throughout the year in the morning, and also at mid-day during the winter. No shading effects are anticipated at the Olympic Village Inn due to proposed building heights and topography. The project would not affect shading at the ski lifts.

As shown by the simulations, some degree of shadowing is caused by the ridge of mountains on the north or south sides of the Valley, depending on the season (see Appendix F). Because the main Village area is located close to the southern edge of the Valley, this shadowing effect is most pronounced at the time of the winter solstice when the sun is at a low angle to the south of the Valley. The proposed Village Commercial Core structures could somewhat intensify the shading experienced at the Village at Squaw Valley during the morning in the winter. By mid-day in the winter, Exhibit 8-21 shows that shadows cast by the proposed project's structures would fall on only a small portion of the southeast corner of the existing Village at Squaw Valley hotel, and would not have a substantial effect on any of the existing outdoor gathering spaces associated with existing resort facilities.

In the summer, the sun is almost directly overhead and there would be very little shadowing effect on public spaces and pedestrian areas. The modeling in Appendix F indicates that the proposed structures would cast shadows on the east side of the Red Wolf Lodge in the morning. This is not anticipated to affect outdoor gathering areas because established gathering spots are interior to the existing lodge buildings. In the spring and fall, there would be additional shading at the southeast side of the Village at Squaw Valley hotel in the morning, which could affect established outdoor gathering places such as sitting areas and walkways. However, as discussed for mid-day conditions in the winter, this effect is expected to be limited.

The proposed structures would also cast shadows on proposed parking lots, outdoor use areas including the open area associated with Squaw Creek, and other proposed buildings. In accordance with the significance criteria above, internal effects of the project are not considered in the analysis.

The shadows cast by the proposed structures would have minimal effect on existing gathering places. During the spring, summer, and fall, the project would result in shading on the southeast corner of the easternmost Intrawest building during the morning. Although there are benches and walkways that would be affected, this small area is not a formal gathering place where visitors spend extended periods of time. The project, as well as all existing structures, would cast longer shadows on winter mornings; however, because the south side of the Valley is in the mountain's shadow during the winter under existing conditions and all outdoor public gathering spaces are currently shaded, there would not be a substantial change to existing conditions where the proposed project would cast shadows during this time period. The project's impacts on existing structures and facilities on adjacent properties due to shadowing would, therefore, be **less than significant**.

## Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required.

## Impact 8-5: Create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

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The addition of construction lighting may detract from views of the night sky and surrounding resort area for residents and visitors. Residents do not have open views of the project site for the most part because their views are typically screened or blocked by vegetation. However, night lighting is more visible. Construction cranes and lighting on tall structures would make these features more noticeable at night than in daytime conditions. Taking into consideration that residents, and to some extent visitors, would have extended views of the project area, and have high sensitivity to visual conditions, this impact would be **potentially significant** for both the main Village area and the East Parcel.

Lighting to serve the project, including employee housing and parking at the East Parcel, would create a new source of substantial nighttime lighting in the area and would potentially increase skyglow conditions in the area. This impact would be **potentially significant** for both the main Village area and the East Parcel.

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## CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS

Construction may involve some nighttime lighting during the construction season, which would be late spring to early fall. Nighttime lighting would be visible from residences and adjacent resort areas. Under existing conditions, resort night lighting is visible from nearby residential areas. The addition of construction lighting may detract from views of the night sky and surrounding resort area for residents and visitors. Residents do not have open views of the project site for the most part because their views are screened or blocked by vegetation. However, night lighting is more visible, as shown in Exhibit 8-10, Viewpoint 2, and Exhibit 8-15, Viewpoint 7. Construction cranes and lighting on tall structures would make these features more noticeable at night than in daytime conditions. Taking into consideration that residents, and to some extent visitors, would have extended views of the project area, and have high sensitivity to visual conditions, this impact would be **potentially significant** for both the main Village area and the East Parcel.



**Legend**

-  Proposed Buildings
-  Existing Buildings



Source: McCabe Architecture 2015

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**Exhibit 8-21**

**Winter 12 p.m. Shadows**



## OPERATIONAL IMPACTS

### Main Village Area

The project would create a new source of substantial nighttime lighting in the area and would potentially increase skyglow conditions in the area. Development, once completed, would have exterior lighting and indoor lighting that would cause light spill to the outside (i.e., light shining through windows illuminating exterior spaces), similar to lighting on existing resort structures nearby (Exhibit 8-10, Viewpoint 2, and Exhibit 8-15, Viewpoint 7). Residential areas in the vicinity would experience views with more lighting; nighttime views from Resort at Squaw Creek would include additional lighting.

In general, lighting would be the minimum required for safety. Commercial areas would have more lighting and primary pedestrian areas would have uniform lighting conditions. Secondary pathways would have lower levels of lighting, providing only what is needed to illuminate pathways. In the commercial core areas, storefronts and associated mixed-use areas would be designed so that indirect light would create a subtle “glow” for pedestrian areas. Landscape accent lighting would be “controlled” to highlight prominent features and pathways and only the minimal light levels necessary would be used.

Vehicle headlights are another potential source of light. Substantial illumination could be generated by headlights shining from vehicles in elevated parking structures, which could affect views where the structures would be located in proximity to residences.

This impact would be **potentially significant**.

### East Parcel

Development on the East Parcel would require night lighting for parking lots, walkways, and exterior building safety lighting. The proposed structures along the Squaw Valley Road frontage would be similar in height to existing commercial structures in the vicinity, and new lighting would be similar to existing lighting at the commercial development across from the project site. However, employee housing structures nearest the residential areas to the north of the site would be approximately 56 feet in height and the shipping and receiving structure would be 40 feet in height. Though the East Parcel is screened from nearby residences by existing forest vegetation, there is a potential for parking lot lighting, headlights on elevated parking structures, exterior building lighting, and lighting spilled from upper story windows to adversely affect nearby residents. Therefore, this impact would be **potentially significant**.

### **Mitigation Measure 8-5a: Install landscaping on the north and west sides of the East Parcel to screen night lighting for adjacent residential areas.**

Landscaping, consisting of a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs, shall be installed to enhance existing vegetation in the open space buffers on the west and north sides of the East Parcel to reduce the effects of night lighting on adjacent residential neighborhoods. Landscape screening shall be installed concurrent with the first phase of development on the East Parcel and shall be reviewed for effectiveness with each successive phase of development. If after the initial installation of landscape screening it is subsequently determined that additional screening is required to improve screening effectiveness, the Development Review Committee (DRC) may require installation of additional landscaping during future construction phases.

### **Mitigation Measure 8-5b: Implement Mitigation Measure 8-2b.**

The project applicant shall implement Mitigation Measure 8-2b, which requires adherence to the VSVSP Design Guidelines.

An Improvement Plan shall be developed that includes a detailed lighting and photometric plan. Specifically, the plan must:

- ▲ Demonstrate compliance with the VSVSP Master Lighting Plan (see Appendix B of the VSVSP). This includes minimizing impacts to adjoining and nearby land uses. No lighting shall be permitted on top of structures.
- ▲ Show streetlights designed in accordance with the Caltrans Traffic Manual and Standard Plans and installed to the satisfaction of the Department of Public Works. Streetlights shall be of a type, height, and design to direct lighting downward, shielding, to the greatest extent practical, light exposure beyond that needed for proper intersection lighting. Streetlights shall not exceed the minimum number required by the Department of Public Works unless otherwise approved by the DRC. Street lighting would be kept to a minimum and full cut off luminaires shall be used. Streetlights lighting vehicular and pedestrian access ways at key intersections where safety is a concern would be no more than 30 feet tall, and in the commercial core streetlights would be no more than 20 feet tall. Parking lots would be lit, but would allow gaps in lighting.
- ▲ Include the type of lighting fixtures proposed in parking areas, including pole height. All site lighting in parking lots shall be full cut-off design. The metal pole color shall be such that the pole will blend into the landscape (i.e., black, bronze, or dark bronze).
- ▲ Include building lighting that is shielded and directed downward, such that the bulb or ballast is not visible. Lighting fixture design shall complement the building colors and materials and shall be used to light entries, soffits, covered walkways and pedestrian areas such as plazas. Roof and wall pack lighting shall not be used. Lighting intensity shall be of a level that only highlights the adjacent building area and ground area and shall not impose glare on any pedestrian or vehicular traffic.
- ▲ Include landscape lighting that will not impose glare on any pedestrian or vehicular traffic.

The Improvement Plan will be submitted to the DRC for review and approval.

### **Mitigation Measure 8-5c: Design parking structures to block direct illumination of adjacent residential buildings.**

Design of parking structures will be subject to design review by the DRC to ensure that parking structures are designed to avoid direct illumination of adjacent buildings from headlights. This may include design elements such as partial walls or other screening on all floors of the structure, and orientation of ramps and access points away from adjacent residential uses.

#### **Significance after Mitigation**

Lighting would be in compliance with Placer County and California Title 24 building code lighting codes as described in Appendix B.8 Master Lighting Plan, of the VSVSP. The VSVSP design guidelines would be in compliance with Placer County codes that would keep lighting to the minimum necessary to provide for safety and would prevent light trespass onto neighboring properties. Implementation of Mitigation Measure 8-5a would reduce the effects of night lighting from the East Parcel on adjacent residential areas by screening with vegetation. With this mitigation measure, lighting or glare generated by the project would have a **less-than-significant** impact on the day and nighttime views of the East Parcel.

While the design guidelines and compliance with Placer County codes would keep lighting to the minimum necessary to provide for safety, the project would create a new source of substantial nighttime lighting in the area and would potentially increase skyglow conditions in the area. There are no mitigation measures available that would reduce the effects of night lighting on residential areas in the vicinity of the main Village area to a less-than-significant level. Implementing standard practices and design guidelines would reduce the effect of this lighting on day and nighttime views of the area. However, residents and visitors may consider this new light an adverse change in nighttime views of the area. Therefore, this impact would remain **significant and unavoidable** for the main Village area.