

4.5 SOCIOECONOMICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Implementation of the alternatives has the potential to affect not only the physical environment but also the social and economic (socioeconomic) environment. A correlation exists between public use of private and National Forest System lands within the project area and the economies and societies of adjacent communities. This correlation encompasses many factors, such as population, employment, town/Placer County (County) tax revenue, tourism, and visitor spending, that are assessed and disclosed herein. The area of economic effect, or analysis area, for the action alternatives is defined as Placer County, California.

The analysis of socioeconomics and environmental justice provided below is not necessary to satisfy the requirements of CEQA because CEQA does not address these issues. The analysis, therefore, falls under the scope of NEPA, not CEQA. However, the potential for the action alternatives to affect economic growth is addressed in Chapter 5, “Other Required NEPA and CEQA Analysis,” in the evaluation of growth-inducing impacts provided in Section 5.2.3. As described in Section 1.7.2, “Resources/Issues Dismissed from Further Documentation in This EIS/EIR,” the action alternatives would not have an adverse effect on population and housing; therefore, these issues are not evaluated further in this EIS/EIR.

4.5.1 Affected Environment

4.5.1.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Placer County Demographics

Population

Placer County has seen considerable population growth over the past 10 years and was ranked second among all California counties in the rate of population growth from January 2003 to January 2013 based on California Department of Finance estimates. Placer County’s population grew 26 percent in the 2003–2013 period, making it the fastest-growing county in the Sacramento region and exceeding average growth rates of the Bay Area and California as a whole (Center for Strategic Economic Research 2013). This baseline growth has produced changes in the County’s demographic composition and has naturally led to increases in housing units to support the population increases (Center for Strategic Economic Research 2013). Table 4.5-1 discloses historic and projected population data.

Table 4.5-1 Population in Placer County, 2003–2023

	2003	2008	2013	2018	2023
Placer County	283,703	333,805	357,463	389,883	420,187

Source: Center for Strategic Economic Research 2013

Race

Approximately 84 percent of Placer County’s population is white, Hispanic, or Latino. Another 3 percent of the population identifies as “some other race,” which are most often persons of Hispanic or Latino origin (U.S. Census Bureau 2016a). The racial breakdown of Placer County is provided in Table 4.5-2.

Table 4.5-2 Race in Placer County, 2015

Race	Population	Percent
White (including Hispanic or Latino)	306,371	84%
Black or African American	5,183	1%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1,982	0.5%
Asian	24,468	7%
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	525	0.1%
Some other race	10,690	3%
Two or more races	17,061	5%
Total	366,280	100%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2016a

Placer County Economy

Economic Sectors and Tourism

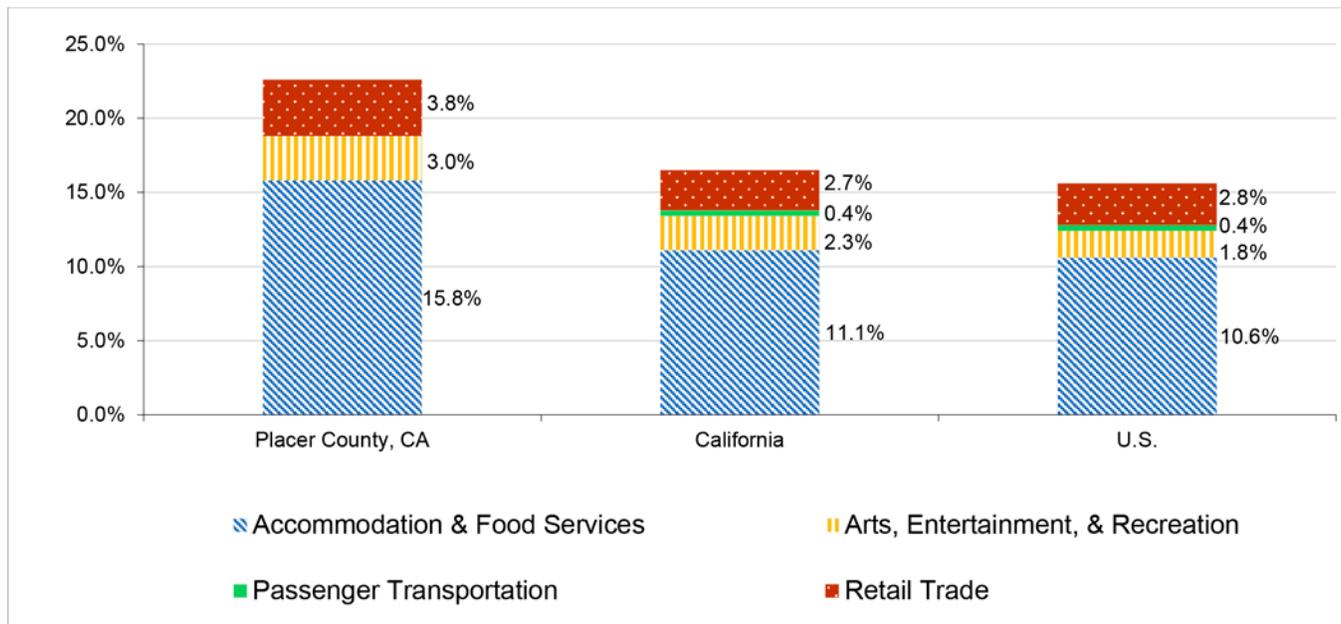
Placer County has a relatively diverse economy with approximately 144,700 wage and salary jobs and an average salary per worker of \$58,484 in 2014 (Caltrans 2015). During 2014, the largest employment gains were observed in education and healthcare (+1,200 jobs), leisure and hospitality (+710 jobs), professional and business services (+590 jobs), and construction (+500 jobs). The only major sectors with declines were financial activities (-160 jobs) and information (-150 jobs). By 2020, employment growth is expected to be greatest in leisure and hospitality (+5,300 jobs), professional and business services (+3,300 jobs), education and healthcare (+3,200 jobs), and wholesale and retail trade (+2,400 jobs). Combined, these sectors are expected to account for 69 percent of net job creation in the County (Caltrans 2015).

Travel and tourism is an important economic component of Placer County, making up approximately 23 percent of all private employment in the County (Exhibit 4.5-1) (U.S. Census Bureau 2016b). In this context, travel and tourism consists of sectors that provide goods and services to visitors to the local economy, as well as to the local population.¹ For the purposes of this analysis, these sectors include retail trade, passenger transportation, arts, entertainment and recreation, and accommodation and food services. For comparison purposes, travel and tourism account for approximately 16 percent of total employment nationally and approximately 17 percent in California (Exhibit 4.5-1) (U.S. Census Bureau 2016b). It should also be noted that the percentage of employment related to travel and tourism in Placer County is likely higher than reported because second-home construction and other tourism-related activities are not included in this calculation.

Employment Status

As of February 2017, Placer County had an unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) of 4.3 percent, ranked among the lowest in the state at 13 out of 58 counties (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017). Between 2015 and 2020, employment growth is expected to average 2.6 percent per year—one of the highest rates in the state—and as stated above, this growth is expected to be greatest in the leisure and hospitality sector (+5,300 jobs by 2020) (Caltrans 2015).

¹ Without additional research, such as surveys, it is unknown what proportion of the jobs in these sectors is attributable to expenditures by visitors, including business and pleasure travelers, and what proportion is attributable to local residents. Some researchers refer to these sectors as “tourism-sensitive.” They could also be called “travel- and tourism-potential sectors” because they have the potential of being influenced by expenditures by nonlocals. In this report, they are referred to as “travel and tourism.”



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2016b

Exhibit 4.5-1 Percent of Total Private Employment in Industries that Include Travel and Tourism, 2014

Income and Poverty

Household income and the proportion of the population below the poverty level are important measures of the ability of households and individuals to achieve economic security. In 2015, Placer County had a higher median household income (\$73,948) and a lower percentage of the population below the poverty level (8.9 percent) than both the State of California and the United States as a whole (U.S. Census Bureau 2016a). These figures are based on total personal income, from both labor (e.g., wages) and nonlabor (e.g., investment income) sources. These figures are presented in Table 4.5-3.

Table 4.5-3 Placer County Median Household Income and Percentage of Population below the Poverty Level

Geographic Area	Median Household Income, including Benefits	Percentage of Population below the Poverty Level
United States	\$53,889	15.5
California	\$61,818	16.3
Placer County	\$73,948	8.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2016a

Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley Economy

A substantial body of prior research regarding ski area operations makes clear that by drawing nonlocal visitation to an area, resorts such as Alpine Meadows Ski Area (Alpine Meadows) and Squaw Valley Ski Area (Squaw Valley) can generate economic activity in the form of employment and visitor sales. These benefits accrue to both the resort and local businesses that benefit from spending by visitors. Perhaps just as important, the direct dollars spent at resort areas and local businesses have a secondary (multiplier) impact, creating additional sales and jobs within the local and regional economy as dollars are spent by visitors are “respent” by local residents.

Visitor Spending

Specific, quantitative analysis of visitor spending at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows is beyond the scope of this analysis. However, an analysis of the economic impact of Lake Tahoe ski areas was completed in 2014 by Patrick Tierney—chairman and professor of the Recreation, Parks and Tourism Department at San Francisco State University—for the tourism organization Ski Lake Tahoe. The analysis, titled *Ski Lake Tahoe*

Regional Economic Impact and Projections Study, found that visitor spending at the nine largest ski resorts in the Tahoe area contributed \$564 million to the local economy during the 2013–2014 winter season (San Francisco State University 2014). That analysis is based on a total of 2.72 million annual snowsports visits. According to the *Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Visitation and Use Assessment* completed for this EIS/EIR, average annual snowsports visitation to Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley over the previous 10 seasons was approximately 885,000 visits (SE Group and RRC Associates 2018). If the economic impact and annual snowsports visits are proportionally distributed among the resorts, the economic impact of Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley is approximately \$183 million annually. Although this figure cannot be considered precise, it does provide a reasonable, order-of-magnitude estimate of the economic impact of baseline visitor spending at Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley.

Employment

In this analysis, existing and prospective new jobs are discussed as “employment positions” or “full-time-equivalent employees” (FTEEs). An employment position may be a year-round or seasonal job and either full-time or part-time, whereas one FTEE provides sufficient work to keep one person employed full-time for 1 year. In seasonal industries, such as ski areas, one FTEE may represent several part time and/or seasonal employment positions.

As is true for most mountain resorts, Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley both employ more workers in winter than in summer. Alpine Meadows provides approximately 688 employment positions (or 284 FTEEs) in winter and approximately 37 full-time, year-round employment positions (or 37 FTEEs). No summer seasonal employees are employed at Alpine Meadows. Squaw Valley provides approximately 2,262 employment positions (or 1,022 FTEEs) in winter and approximately 633 employment positions (or 424 FTEEs) in summer, including full-time, year-round positions (Spent, pers. comm., 2017). These are direct resort jobs (i.e., employees of Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley) and are created each year in response to visitation at the resorts. Tables 4.5-4 and 4.5-5 summarize the existing employment at Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley.

Table 4.5-4 Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley Baseline Employment

Employment Type	Full-Time Positions		Part-Time Positions		Full-Time-Equivalents	
	Alpine Meadows	Squaw Valley	Alpine Meadows	Squaw Valley	Alpine Meadows	Squaw Valley
Year-round employment	37	291	0	0	37	291
Winter seasonal employment	446	953	242	1,018	284	731
Summer seasonal employment	0	189	0	153	0	133

Source: Spent, pers. comm., 2017

Table 4.5-5 Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley Baseline Employment by Season

Resort	Winter Positions	Winter Full-Time-Equivalents	Summer Positions	Summer Full-Time-Equivalents
Alpine Meadows	725	321	37	37
Squaw Valley	2,262	1,022	633	424

Source: Spent, pers. comm., 2017

Town/County Tax Revenue

The aforementioned San Francisco State University economic impact study found that the nine largest ski resorts in the Tahoe area generated \$33 million in tax revenue for state and local governments in response to visitor spending at the resorts (San Francisco State University 2014). If the tax revenues and annual skier visits are proportionally distributed among the resorts, Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley generate approximately \$11 million in state and local government tax revenues annually. Again, although this figure cannot be considered precise, it does provide a reasonable, order-of-magnitude estimate of the tax revenue impact of baseline visitor spending at Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley.

4.5.1.2 REGULATORY SETTING

Federal

Executive Order 12898

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies (EPA 2018). Executive Order 12898 (EO 12898) relates to environmental justice and requires, in brief, that each federal agency will make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.

The Council on Environmental Quality provides the following definitions to guide compliance with environmental justice requirements in NEPA (Council on Environmental Quality 1997):

- ▲ “Minority populations should be identified where either: (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.”
- ▲ “Low-income populations in an affected area should be identified with the annual statistical poverty thresholds from the Bureau of the Census’ Current Population Reports, Series P-60 on Income and Poverty. In identifying low-income populations, agencies may consider as a community either a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a set of individuals (such as migrant workers or Native Americans), where either type of group experiences common conditions of environmental exposure or effect.”

No existing minority populations were identified where either (a) the minority population of the affected area exceeds 50 percent or (b) the minority population percentage of the affected area is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis. Likewise, no low-income populations were identified in the affected area. Therefore, inconsistencies between the project and EO 12898 would not occur.

State

Socioeconomics

CEQA requires analysis of a proposed project’s potential impacts on population growth and housing supply, but social and economic changes are not considered environmental impacts in and of themselves under CEQA unless they contribute to a significant adverse physical change in the environment. CEQA also permits discussion of social and economic changes that would result from a change in the physical environment and could in turn lead to additional (secondary or indirect) effects in the physical environment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064[f]). However, neither of these issues directly relates to the federal requirement to address socioeconomics.

Environmental Justice

California does not require environmental justice analysis in documents prepared for CEQA compliance.

Local

There are no local laws, regulations, or policies directly relevant to the federal requirement for an evaluation of socioeconomics and environmental justice.

4.5.2 Analysis Methods

4.5.2.1 METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Economic impacts typically are defined at three levels:

- ▲ *Direct*—employment and sales created as a direct impact of a business. On- and off-site construction jobs, resort-based jobs, and nonresort jobs generated by visitor expenditures are included in this category.
- ▲ *Indirect*—employment and sales created by industry-to-industry spending. For instance, increased food and beverage spending at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows would result in the purchase of more supplies from food vendors. This revenue would allow the food vendors to create more employment. These are indirect jobs.
- ▲ *Induced*—employment created by increased household spending. The additional jobs and income created by direct and indirect spending would allow consumers to increase their spending on goods and services. This spending would allow businesses to create more jobs. These are induced jobs.

These definitions will be employed in the following effects analysis as a tool to distinguish between different types of impacts.

As described in Section 2.2.6, “Resource Protection Measures,” the project incorporates a number of Resource Protection Measures (RPMs) designed to avoid and minimize environmental effects. These RPMs are considered part of the project by the Forest Service and will be conditions of approval of the Placer County Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The text of all RPMs is provided in Appendix B. The potential effects of implementing the action alternatives are analyzed as follows: The effect of the action alternatives was determined, relevant RPMs were applied, and the effectiveness of reducing adverse effects was determined. If additional measures were needed to further reduce effects, they were identified.

4.5.2.2 EFFECTS ANALYSIS AND SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

NEPA Indicators

An environmental document prepared to comply with NEPA must consider the context and intensity of the environmental effects that would be caused by or result from the action alternatives. Under NEPA, impacts should be addressed in proportion to their significance (40 CFR 1502.2[b]), meaning that severe impacts should be described in more detail than less consequential impacts. This is intended to help decision makers and the public focus on the project’s key effects. The evaluation of effects considers the magnitude, duration, and significance of the changes. Changes that would improve the existing condition if they occur are noted and considered beneficial, and detrimental impacts are characterized as adverse. Where there would be no change, a “no effect” conclusion is used. The Forest Service has determined that the action alternatives could potentially alter certain socioeconomic characteristics of Placer County or the communities of Alpine Meadows and Olympic Valley, California. The following analytical indicators are used to inform the Forest Service’s determination of impacts:

- ▲ Qualitative analysis of potential effects to socioeconomic indicators in Placer County, including: population, employment (part-time seasonal employment vs. full-time equivalents), Town/County tax revenue, tourism and visitor spending (**Section 4.5.1, “Affected Environment,” and Impacts 4.5-1, 4.5-2, 4.5-3**)
- ▲ Disclosure of compliance with EO 12898, Environmental Justice (**Sections 4.5.1.2, “Regulatory Setting”**)

CEQA Criteria

CEQA does not require the analysis of effects related to socioeconomics and environmental justice, and neither the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G checklist nor the Placer County Initial Study checklist includes questions/thresholds directly related to these issues. However, the land use section of the Placer County checklist does include questions related to issues similar to those considered in analyses of socioeconomics and environmental justice. See the discussion of land use in Section 4.4. Also, as stated previously, the potential for the action alternatives to affect economic growth is addressed in Chapter 5, “Other Required NEPA and CEQA Analysis,” in the evaluation of growth-inducing impacts provided in Section 5.2.3.

4.5.2.3 ISSUES NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

While each of the action alternatives would generate economic activity in the form of increased visitor spending, employment and tax revenues, the overall socioeconomic trends in Placer County (population growth, racial diversity, a travel and tourism-based economy, income and poverty levels, and environmental justice) are expected to remain within their current trends under each alternative.

Population

According to population growth projections, Placer County’s baseline resident population will grow to 420,187 year-round residents by 2023. This growth represents an 8-percent increase over the 2018 projection. Although workers may relocate to Placer County to fill the new employment positions created under the selected alternative, this population projection already accounts for the amount of job creation that would be experienced under any of the action alternatives. Thus, population growth resulting from implementing any of the action alternatives is expected to have a negligible effect on the baseline population trend. This issue is not discussed further in this Draft EIS/EIR.

Race

Racial diversity is limited in Placer County, with approximately 84 percent of the Placer County population identifying as white (demographic cohort, including Hispanic and Latino). None of the action alternatives are anticipated to measurably affect the racial breakdown of the County. This issue is not discussed further in this Draft EIS/EIR.

Economy

Historically, travel and tourism has been an important component of the Placer County economy. Currently, at least 23 percent of all employment in Placer County is related to travel and tourism operations. None of the action alternatives are anticipated to affect this overall economic condition. Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley are expected to remain important economic drivers in Placer County for the foreseeable future under each alternative. This issue is not discussed further in this Draft EIS/EIR.

Income and Poverty

Measures of individual prosperity are closely related to the overall economic condition in a local economy. Compared with both the State of California and the United States as a whole, Placer County has a relatively high median household income (\$73,948) and low percentage of population below the poverty level (8.9 percent). These conditions are expected to remain under each alternative. As a result, travel and tourism is expected to remain an important economic driver in Placer County under each alternative, and for this reason the nature of employment opportunities and compensation is also expected to remain consistent with the projected trend. This issue is not discussed further in this Draft EIS/EIR.

Environmental Justice

No changes or modifications would be approved under any alternative that would directly or indirectly affect minority or low-income populations in Placer County. The baseline conditions presented in Section 4.5.1, “Affected Environment,” are expected to continue under each alternative. There are no minority or low-income populations in the vicinity of the project site, and no minority or low-income populations would be

disproportionately affected by environmental effects resulting from the action alternatives. This issue is not discussed further in this Draft EIS/EIR.

4.5.3 Direct and Indirect Environmental Consequences

4.5.3.1 ALTERNATIVE 1 – NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Impact 4.5-1 (Alt. 1): Visitor Spending Impacts

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative would result in a continuation of existing conditions. There would be no improvements to the resort; therefore, the current trend in visitation and resultant visitor spending is expected to be unchanged. There would be **no effect** under NEPA.

Under Alternative 1 –No Action Alternative, the Tahoe National Forest (TNF) and Placer County would not provide necessary authorizations to allow construction of a gondola or Gazex facilities. The outcome would be a continuation of existing conditions, with no new construction and no installation and operation of new facilities. Therefore, the current trend in visitation and resultant visitor spending is expected to be unchanged.

NEPA Effects Conclusion

With the current trend in visitation and resultant visitor spending unchanged, there would be **no effect** related to this issue.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 4.5-2 (Alt. 1): Employment Impacts

Alternative 1 –No Action Alternative would result in a continuation of existing conditions. There would be no improvements to the resorts; therefore, no new employment positions would be created at the resorts. There would be **no effect** under NEPA.

Under Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative, the TNF and Placer County would not provide necessary authorizations to allow construction of a gondola or Gazex facilities. The outcome would be a continuation of existing conditions, with no new construction and no installation and operation of new facilities. Therefore, no new employment positions would be created at the resorts.

NEPA Effects Conclusion

With no new employment positions being created, there would be **no effect** related to this issue.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 4.5-3 (Alt. 1): Town/County Tax Revenue Impacts

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative would result in a continuation of existing conditions. There would be no improvements to the resorts; therefore, the current trend in visitor spending and resultant town/County tax revenue is expected to be unchanged. There would be **no effect** under NEPA.

Under Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative, the TNF and Placer County would not provide necessary authorizations to allow construction of a gondola or Gazex facilities. The outcome would be a continuation of

existing conditions, with no new construction and no installation and operation of new facilities. Therefore, the current trend in visitor spending and resultant town/County tax revenue is expected to be unchanged.

NEPA Effects Conclusion

With the current trend in visitor spending and resultant town/County tax revenue unchanged, there would be **no effect** related to this issue.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

4.5.3.2 ALTERNATIVE 2

Impact 4.5-1 (Alt. 2): Visitor Spending Impacts

Modest increases in snowsports visitation resulting from Alternative 2 would create slight increases in visitor spending. The increase in visitor spending would generate economic activity within the local economy, but not to a degree that would appreciably affect the overall socioeconomic conditions of Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, or the greater Lake Tahoe region. Under NEPA, and considering the NEPA indicators, absent RPMs and/or mitigation, there would be **minorly beneficial** direct and indirect effects related to visitor spending. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect.

As detailed in the *Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Visitation and Use Assessment*, (refer to Appendix C) improved access between the two resorts, fluctuation in the total number of participants, and the potential for marketing interest resulting from the Alternative 2 could generate a modest increase in snowsports visitation to Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows (SE Group and RRC Associates 2018). By the fifth year after implementation, the cumulative number of increased visits associated with Alternative 2 is expected to total roughly 36,856. Applying the findings of the San Francisco State University economic impact study referenced above to the increased visits, cumulative indirect visitor spending over the initial 5 years of winter operation would be approximately \$7.6 million (an increase of roughly 1.4 percent in the first year of operation, with an average of less than 1 percent per annum over the initial five seasons).

Although this additional visitation would generate additional visitor spending, the increase in visitation and associated visitor spending would be marginal given the scale of overall snowsports visitation at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows and in the greater Lake Tahoe region. This is particularly true given the fact that the anticipated increase in visitation resulting from Alternative 2 is within the existing range of variability for total annual snowsports visitation at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows resulting from factors such as variations in annual snowfall, national/regional demographic trends, and the competitive marketplace (SE Group and RRC Associates 2018). Any visitor spending impacts would positively affect the local Placer County economy by creating additional sales and economic activity within the local business sector.

NEPA Effects Conclusion

Alternative 2 would generate slight increases in visitor spending. These increases would be marginal compared to overall visitor spending at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows and in the greater Lake Tahoe region. Under NEPA, and considering the NEPA indicators, absent RPMs and/or mitigation, there would be **minorly beneficial** direct and indirect effects related to visitor spending. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 4.5-2 (Alt. 2): Employment Impacts

Alternative 2 would directly create 10 new employment positions (six FTEEs) at Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows. Modest snowsports visitation increases resulting from Alternative 2 would create modest increases in indirect employment in other local businesses. In addition, construction of project components would generate short-term job opportunities and economic activity in the construction industry in the year that construction occurs. The increase in employment would generate economic activity within the local economy, but not to a degree that would appreciably affect the overall socioeconomic conditions of Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, or the greater Lake Tahoe region. Under NEPA, and considering the NEPA indicators, absent RPMs and/or mitigation, there would be **minorly beneficial** direct and indirect effects related to visitor spending. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect.

Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows would add two new full-time, year-round employment positions and eight full-time, seasonal positions to operate the proposed gondola under Alternative 2. These would be considered direct employment impacts from the project and translate to six FTEEs.

Modest indirect employment growth is also expected outside Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows as a result of Alternative 2. As detailed in the *Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Visitation and Use Assessment*, improved access between the two resorts, fluctuation in the total number of participants, and the potential for marketing interest resulting from Alternative 2 could generate a modest increase in annual snowsports visitation to Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows (SE Group and RRC Associates 2018). This increased visitation would generate new economic activity in local businesses, which would support modest employment increases in the region. In addition, construction of project components would generate short-term job opportunities and economic activity in the construction industry in the year that construction occurs. Any employment impacts would positively affect the local Placer County economy by creating additional jobs and economic activity in local businesses.

NEPA Effects Conclusions

Alternative 2 would generate slight increases in employment positions in the Placer County economy. These increases would be marginal compared to overall employment at Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley or within the greater Lake Tahoe region. Under NEPA, and considering the NEPA indicators, absent RPMs and/or mitigation, there would be **minorly beneficial** direct and indirect effects related to employment. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Impact 4.5-3 (Alt. 2): Town/County Tax Revenue Impacts

Modest snowsports visitation increases resulting from Alternative 2 would create modest increases in town/County tax revenues in the local economy. The increase in town/County tax revenue would generate economic activity that would increase town/County tax revenues further, but not to a degree that would appreciably affect the overall socioeconomic conditions of the local economy. Under NEPA, and considering the NEPA indicators, absent RPMs and/or mitigation, there would be **minorly beneficial** direct and indirect effects related to town/County tax revenue. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect.

As detailed in the *Squaw Valley | Alpine Meadows Base-to-Base Gondola Visitation and Use Assessment*, improved access between the two resorts, fluctuation in the total number of participants, and the potential for marketing interest resulting from Alternative 2 could generate a modest increase in annual snowsports visitation to Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows (SE Group and RRC Associates 2018). This increased visitation would create new economic activity in local businesses, which would support modest town/County tax revenue increases in the region. Any town/County tax revenue impacts would positively affect local governments by creating additional tax revenues and economic activity in the local economy.

NEPA Effects Conclusion

Alternative 2 would generate modest increases in town/County tax revenues for local governments. These increases would be minimal compared to overall revenues for these governments. Under NEPA, and considering the NEPA indicators, absent RPMs and/or mitigation, there would be **minutely beneficial** direct and indirect effects related to employment. There are no applicable RPMs that would mitigate this effect.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

4.5.3.3 ALTERNATIVE 3

The anticipated socioeconomic impacts associated with Alternative 3 related to visitor spending, employment, and town/County tax revenue would be identical to those discussed above for Alternative 2.

4.5.3.4 ALTERNATIVE 4

The anticipated socioeconomic impacts associated with Alternative 4 related to visitor spending, employment, and town/County tax revenue are identical to those discussed above for Alternative 2.

4.5.3.5 SUMMARY OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS

Table 4.5-6 provides a summary of the effects determinations for the direct and indirect effects evaluated above for each alternative.

For Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative, there would be no effect for all NEPA indicators.

Under the action alternatives, for Impacts 4.5-1, 4.5-2, and 4.5-3, there would be a minutely beneficial effect for all NEPA indicators. Although each of the action alternatives would generate modest positive effects associated with visitor spending, employment, and town/County tax revenues, the changes that would occur would not appreciably affect the overall socioeconomic conditions of Squaw Valley, Alpine Meadows, or the greater Lake Tahoe region. There is no meaningful difference in effects across the three action alternatives for each of these effects.

Table 4.5-6 Summary of Direct and Indirect Effects

Impact	Applicable Analytical Indicators and Significance Criteria	Alt. 1	Alt. 2	Alt. 3	Alt. 4
4.5-1: Visitor Spending Impacts	Qualitative analysis of potential effects to socioeconomic indicators in Placer County, including: population, employment (part-time seasonal employment vs. full-time equivalents), Town/County tax revenue, tourism and visitor spending	No effect	Minutely beneficial	Minutely beneficial Same as for Alternative 2	Minutely beneficial Same as for Alternatives 2 and 3
4.5-2: Employment Impacts	Qualitative analysis of potential effects to socioeconomic indicators in Placer County, including: population, employment (part-time seasonal employment vs. full-time equivalents), Town/County tax revenue, tourism and visitor spending	No effect	Minutely beneficial	Minutely beneficial Same as for Alternative 2	Minutely beneficial Same as for Alternatives 2 and 3
4.5-3: Town/County Tax Revenue Impacts	Qualitative analysis of potential effects to socioeconomic indicators in Placer County, including: population, employment (part-time seasonal employment vs. full-time equivalents), Town/County tax revenue, tourism and visitor spending	No effect	Minutely beneficial	Minutely beneficial Same as for Alternative 2	Minutely beneficial Same as for Alternatives 2 and 3

4.5.4 Cumulative Effects

4.5.4.1 METHODS AND APPROACH

The list of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects considered in this cumulative analysis is provided in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIS/EIR. The spatial scope for the cumulative analysis is Placer County, the same as the area of economic effect used to evaluate the action alternatives.

Forest Service decisions within the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows special use permit areas, as well as the approval of private land development by Placer County, have contributed to economic growth trends within Placer County over the past several decades. As previously detailed in the “Affected Environment” section, travel and tourism is an important economic component of Placer County, and Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows are an important part of this industry. Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows attract both visitors and employees. As these resorts develop, they will hire more employees and attract new visitors, incrementally adding to the economic and social impacts on the region. As noted, the estimation of economic impacts is related to visitation because expenditures by visitors generate industry sales, generate tax revenues, and support new jobs. No major increases in winter visitation are expected under Alternatives 1, 2, 3, or 4. Rather, modest increases in annual snowsports visitation are expected under each action alternative. Although positive economic impacts would be associated with slightly increased visitation under each action alternative, they would be minor in the context of Placer County, and no quantifiable cumulative effects are expected.

Project	Potential Impacts
Caldwell property (White Wolf) development	Increased property values of the new residences on the Caldwell property, potentially leading to higher property taxes.
General Development in Olympic Valley	Additional development added to Olympic Valley would entail construction of a large residential complex along Squaw Valley Road, and new recreation infrastructure at Squaw Valley (e.g., Timberline Twister). This development could lead to increased visitor spending, additional employment opportunities, and increased tax revenue within Olympic Valley.
General Development in Alpine Meadows	Additional development added to Alpine Meadows would potentially result in additional housing, public buildings, and public services and facilities. This development could lead to increased visitor spending, additional employment opportunities, and increased tax revenue within Alpine Meadows.

4.5.4.2 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Under Alternative 1, there would be no improvements to the resorts; therefore, the current trend in visitation and the resultant economic impacts of visitor spending, employment, and town/County tax revenues are expected to be unchanged. As a result, no cumulative socioeconomic impacts would occur.

Alternative 2

Modest increases in snowsports visitation under Alternative 2 are expected to create slight increases in visitor spending, employment, and town/County tax revenues. These increases would have a positive impact

on the local economy. In consideration of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, Alternative 2 would minimally and incrementally contribute to the overall trend of economic growth in Placer County described in the “Affected Environment” section, which encompasses growth in the local economy more broadly and in the travel and tourism sector in particular. This socioeconomic effect would be minorly beneficial.

Alternatives 3 and 4

Modest increases in snowsports visitation under Alternative 3 or 4 are expected to create slight increases in visitor spending, employment, and town/County tax revenues. These increases would have a positive impact on the local economy.

Differing slightly from Alternative 2, the configuration of the proposed base-to-base gondola under Alternative 3 or 4 would position a gondola mid-station within the existing and proposed residential development on the Caldwell property. Under either of these alternatives, this mid-station would provide lift-served access to and from the Caldwell property and residence(s). Providing lift access to residential development typically leads to higher property values and corresponding higher property taxes.

In consideration of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects, Alternative 3 or 4 would minimally and incrementally contribute to the overall trend of economic growth in Placer County described in the “Affected Environment” section, which encompasses growth in the local economy more broadly and in the travel and tourism sector in particular. This socioeconomic effect would be minorly beneficial.

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