

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Placer County and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) are jointly proposing to adopt the Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan (Area Plan), which addresses the portion of Placer County located within the Tahoe Basin, including portions of the north and west shores of Lake Tahoe.

With adoption of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan in December 2012, TRPA created a new planning instrument, the area plan. Unlike plan area statements (PASs) and community plans, which describe allowable land uses for specific areas in the Tahoe Basin, area plans allow local governments and regulatory agencies to implement the Regional Plan at a smaller scale and with greater flexibility, allowing TRPA to focus on issues of regional environmental significance. Under the new planning system, multiple requirements—TRPA, local, state, and federal are addressed in a coordinated fashion through the Regional Plan and area plans. The result is greater planning and permitting efficiency, while retaining essential oversight by TRPA of large-scale projects and projects in more sensitive Tahoe Basin environments.

The proposed Area Plan was prepared and initiated by Placer County as an update to its land use regulations in the Tahoe Basin. It is intended to implement and achieve the environmental improvement and redevelopment goals of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan and the TRPA/Tahoe Metropolitan Planning Organization (TMPO) Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The Area Plan would also satisfy California's comprehensive long-term general plan requirements, and would serve as the General Plan for the Tahoe Basin portion of Placer County (California Government Code Section 65300 et seq.). Adoption of the Area Plan would supersede the following general plans, community plans, PASs, and related planning documents adopted to implement the 1987 Regional Plan, and relevant sections of the Placer County Zoning Ordinance:

- ▲ West Shore General Plan;
- ▲ Tahoe City Area General Plan;
- ▲ North Tahoe Area General Plan;
- ▲ Tahoe City Community Plan;
- ▲ Carnelian Bay Community Plan;
- ▲ Tahoe Vista Community Plan;
- ▲ Kings Beach Community Plan;
- ▲ Kings Beach Industrial Community Plan;
- ▲ California North Stateline Community Plan;
- ▲ 51 PASs adopted for Placer County;
- ▲ Placer County Standards & Guidelines for Signage, Parking and Design; and
- ▲ Placer County Zoning Ordinance, Sections 17.02.050(D) and 17.56.202, and Appendices B, C, D, and F.

The proposed Area Plan largely carries forward the details of these existing documents into a single consolidated Area Plan; proposed changes are primarily focused within the TRPA-designated town centers in Tahoe City and Kings Beach. The Draft Area Plan is available for download and review at:

<http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/tahoebasinareaplan>.

The proposed Area Plan contemplates one near-term redevelopment project, the Tahoe City Lodge, and one environmental redevelopment design concept, the Kings Beach Center, both identified as initial opportunities to incentivize and facilitate redevelopment in these areas. The Tahoe City Lodge is proposed by a private developer, Kila Tahoe LLC, and would redevelop an existing commercial complex into a 118-unit lodge with a mix of hotel rooms and 1- and 2-bedroom suites, hotel amenities, and parking. The project

would also include redevelopment of the existing clubhouse building and new shared-use parking at the Tahoe City Golf Course. The Kings Beach Center is a conceptual mixed-use redevelopment design on parcels owned by Placer County.

1.2 PROJECT LOCATION

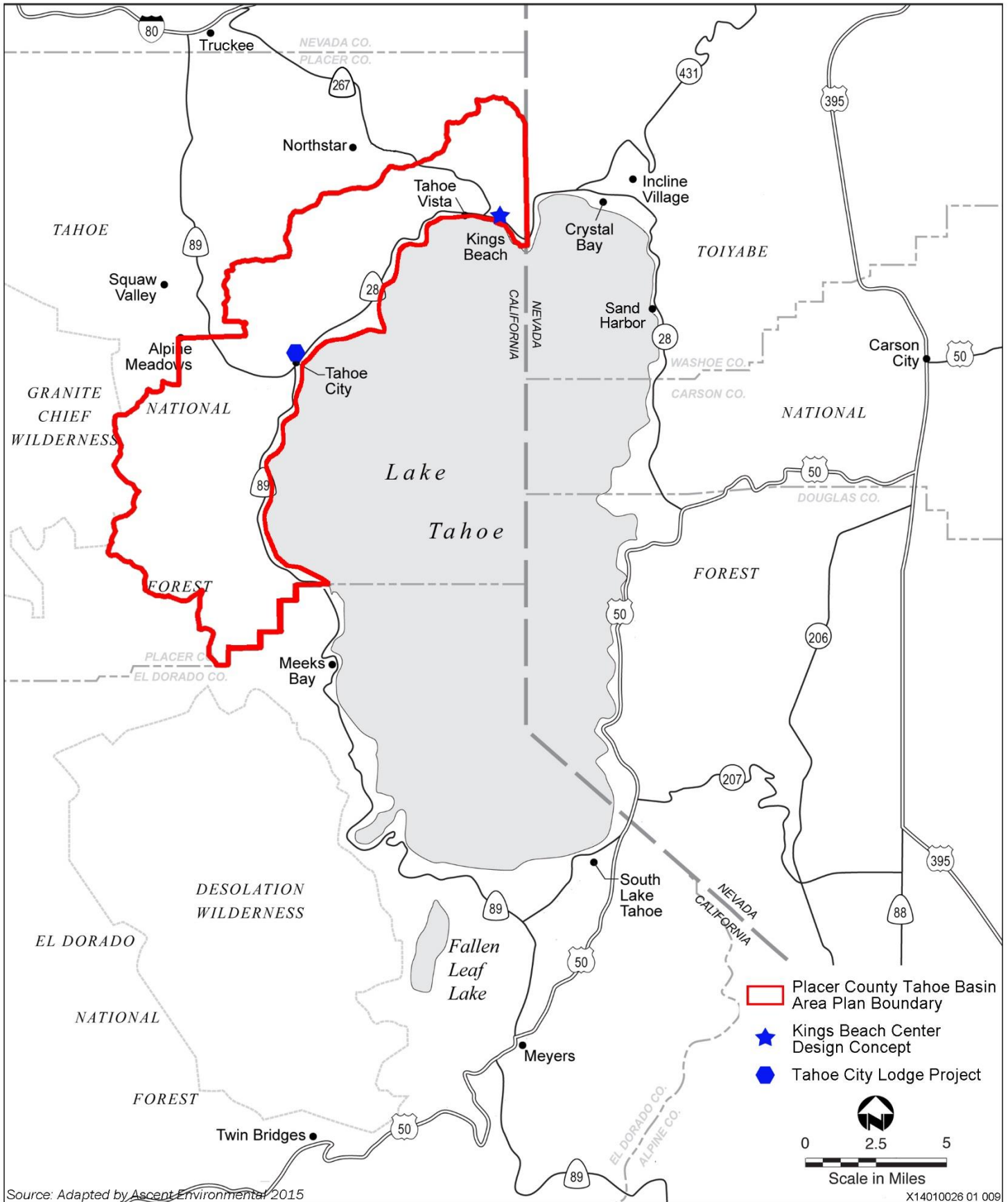
The Area Plan addresses that portion of Placer County that is within the Tahoe Basin and, as a consequence, also within the jurisdiction of TRPA, and encompasses an area of 46,162 acres (72.1 square miles including the communities of Kings Beach/Stateline, Tahoe City, Carnelian Bay, Dollar Point, Sunnyside, Homewood, Tahoe Vista, and Tahoma. The area addressed by the Area Plan is bounded by El Dorado County to the south, the state of Nevada to the east, Martis and Squaw Valleys to the north, and the Sierra Nevada to the west. Exhibit 1-1 shows the location of the area included in the Area Plan relative to other Tahoe region communities.

1.3 AGENCY ROLES AND PURPOSE OF THE EIR/EIS

Placer County is the primary agency undertaking the project and the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.) which require preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR). TRPA has responsibility for implementation of the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan, approval of the Area Plan, and annual/quadrennial reviews of the Area Plan to ensure that development within the area meets adopted standards. TRPA is the lead agency pursuant to the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact (Public Law 96-551), 1980 revision (the Compact), Code of Ordinances, and Rules of Procedure, which require preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) for this project.

This joint EIR/EIS evaluates the potential environmental effects associated with adoption and implementation of the proposed Area Plan, construction and operation of the Tahoe City Lodge project, and implementation of the Kings Beach Center design concept. Though more focused and site-specific than the Lake Tahoe Regional Plan, the Area Plan applies to a broad geography (over 46,000 acres) and is intended to guide planning decisions over a long time frame. The policy-oriented nature of the Area Plan is such that the EIR/EIS impact analysis is prepared at a programmatic level—that is, a more general analysis with a level of detail and degree of specificity commensurate with that of the plan itself. Similarly, because the Kings Beach Center design concept lacks sufficient detail for definitive impact analysis, that portion of the project is also evaluated in a programmatic fashion. The Tahoe City Lodge, however, is assessed at a project level in this EIR/EIS. Project details are developed to a sufficient degree that environmental effects can be identified and assessed with greater certainty, and specific mitigation measures developed to address potentially significant effects.

The purpose of the EIR/EIS is to identify and assess the anticipated environmental effects of each alternative, with a focus on significant and potentially significant environmental impacts. Its role is not to recommend approval or denial of the project, but to provide sufficient environmental information to allow meaningful comment and participation by public agencies, interest groups, and the public; to allow the Placer County Planning Commission, TRPA Advisory Planning Commission, and/or TRPA Regional Plan Implementation Committee to recommend a preferred alternative to the Placer County Board of Supervisors and TRPA Governing Board, respectively; and ultimately for the decision-making bodies to render fully informed decisions with regard to the proposed Area Plan and Tahoe City Lodge project.



Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental 2015

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Exhibit 1-1

Regional Location



1.4 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The environmental review process began with efforts to gather information to establish the breadth, or scope, of environmental review. A notice of preparation (NOP) was issued to inform agencies and the public that an EIR/EIS would be prepared for the project, and to solicit views of agencies and the public as to the scope and content of the document. Scoping meetings and public workshops were held to allow oral expression of those views, provide information about the proposal, and to answer questions. A summary of the written and oral comments and issues raised by the public, agencies, and organizations, and the comment letters in their entirety, are included in Appendix A.

An NOP was initially issued for the Area Plan alone on July 16, 2014. In response to public and stakeholder input, the lead agencies revised and reissued the NOP on June 3, 2015 when the Draft Area Plan was ready for concurrent release. The revised NOP addressed changes to the Area Plan made in response to stakeholder input, and the newly added project-level environmental review of the Tahoe City Lodge project. The NOP was submitted to the California and Nevada state clearinghouses and distributed to interested and affected federal, state, and local agencies; interested parties; and organizations. The NOP was circulated for 61 days, through August 3, 2015.

Public scoping meetings were held as follows:

June 10, 2015	TRPA Advisory Planning Commission (APC) Meeting at TRPA	128 Market Street Stateline, Nevada
June 16, 2015	Placer County-hosted meeting at North Tahoe Event Center	8318 North Lake Boulevard Kings Beach, California
June 16, 2015	Placer County-hosted meeting at Tahoe City Public Utility District	221 Fairway Drive Tahoe City, California
June 24, 2015	TRPA Regional Plan Implementation Committee (RPIC) Meeting at TRPA	128 Market Street Stateline, Nevada
June 24, 2015	TRPA Governing Board Meeting at TRPA	128 Market Street Stateline, Nevada

The County also conducted two public workshops on June 22 and 29 in Kings Beach and Tahoe City, respectively, to seek input on the Draft Area Plan.

Appendix A of this Draft EIR/EIS contains the Scoping Summary Report with a table listing the substantive comments on the NOP, as well as copies of the comment letters.

This Draft EIR/EIS is being made available for 60 days to allow public review and comment. Copies of the Draft EIR/EIS and proposed Area Plan may be reviewed online at, or downloaded from, www.placer.ca.gov or trpa.org, or may be reviewed at the following locations:

Placer County Planning Services
775 N. Lake Boulevard
Tahoe City, California 96145

Placer County Planning Services
3091 County Center Drive
Auburn, California 95603

Kings Beach Public Library
301 Secline Drive
Kings Beach, California 96143

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
128 Market Street
Stateline, Nevada 89449

Tahoe City Public Library
740 N Lake Boulevard
Tahoe City, California 96145

Placer County offices are open during normal business hours. The county’s Tahoe City office is open to the public Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. TRPA offices are open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (closed 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.). TRPA offices are closed on Tuesdays.

Comments on the Draft EIR/EIS may be made either in writing before the end of the review period or at the public hearings to be held before the Placer County North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council, Placer County Planning Commission, Placer County Board of Supervisors, TRPA Advisory Planning Commission (APC), TRPA Regional Plan Implementation Committee (RPIC), and TRPA Governing Board. Dates, times, and locations of the public hearings are provided in the notice of availability accompanying this Draft EIR/EIS. Written comments on the Draft EIR/EIS should be mailed or emailed to:

Shirlee Herrington
 Placer County Planning Services
 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190
 Auburn, CA 95603
 e-mail: cdraecs@placer.ca.gov

Lucia Maloney
 Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
 P.O. Box 5310
 Stateline, NV 89449
 e-mail: lmaloney@trpa.org

Oral comments may be provided at a series of public meetings and workshops as listed in Table 1-1. Following the public and agency review and comment period, comments relating to the environmental analysis will be reviewed and written responses will be prepared. The Draft EIR/EIS, together with responses to comments and other CEQA- and TRPA-mandated information, will constitute the Final EIR/EIS. The Final EIR/EIS will be considered for certification by Placer County and TRPA, and if certified, the respective decision-making bodies may take action on the Area Plan and Tahoe City Lodge project.

Table 1-1 Opportunities for Public Comment on the Draft EIR/EIS

Date	Meeting Type	Meeting Location and Time
July 13, 2016	TRPA Advisory Planning Commission	Board Room, 128 Market Street, Stateline, Nevada. Meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. ¹
July 27, 2016	TRPA Regional Plan Implementation Committee	North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 N. Lake Boulevard, Kings Beach, California. Meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. ¹
July 27, 2016	TRPA Governing Board	North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 N. Lake Boulevard, Kings Beach, California. Meeting begins at 9:30 a.m. ¹
July 28, 2016	Placer County Planning Commission	North Tahoe Event Center, 8318 N. Lake Boulevard, Kings Beach, California. Meeting begins at 10:00 a.m. ²
August 11, 2016	Placer County North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council	North Lake Tahoe Event Center, 8318 N. Lake Boulevard, Kings Beach, California. Meeting begins at 6:00 p.m.

¹ The TRPA APC, RPIC, and Governing Board meetings will begin at 9:30 a.m.; however, the proposed project is not time certain. Please refer to the meeting agenda posted at <http://www.trpa.org/calendar/> up to 1 week prior to the meeting for updated information.

² The Placer County Planning Commission meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m.; however, the proposed project is not time certain. Please refer to the meeting agenda posted at <https://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pchearings> up to 1 week prior to the meeting for updated information.

Source: Compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2016

1.5 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THE EIR/EIS

This EIR/EIS is an informational document to be used in the planning and decision-making process for the adoption and implementation of the proposed Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan and approval of the Tahoe City Lodge project. After reviewing this EIR/EIS and other information related to the Area Plan and lodge project, Placer County and TRPA will coordinate consideration of the environmental document and actions related to the Area Plan and the Tahoe City Lodge. Placer County will consider and certify the

document's compliance with CEQA, and TRPA will consider the document's compliance with the TRPA Code of Ordinances and Rules of Procedure.

1.5.1 Area Plan

Following certification of the EIR/EIS, the Placer County Board of Supervisors will consider environmental and other information, and select the alternative to approve as the Area Plan. TRPA will consider Area Plan approval following decision by Placer County.

This EIR/EIS provides information relevant to compliance with the TRPA Code requirements for attainment of the environmental threshold carrying capacities (thresholds). In the case of the proposed Area Plan, the plan is intended to assist in attainment of thresholds and mitigation of existing adverse conditions. As mandated by the Code, TRPA may not approve a project if it would contribute to exceeded of any of the nine TRPA threshold standards. If a project would cause a threshold to be exceeded, mitigation must be adopted to reduce the impact and maintain the threshold. Pursuant to Chapter 4 of the TRPA Code, written findings regarding the disposition of all significant environmental impacts and associated mitigation measures, supported by substantial evidence in the record, must be prepared and adopted prior to final approval. Findings for the Area Plan will be prepared subsequent to completion of the Final EIS and considered by the TRPA Governing Board in its approval process.

In accordance with Section 15168 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a program EIR may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related to, among other things, the issuance of general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program or individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects that can be mitigated in similar ways. The proposed Area Plan meets these criteria for use of a program EIR.

In accordance with Section 15168(c), subsequent activities consistent with the Area Plan would be examined in light of the information in this program EIR to determine whether additional environmental documentation must be prepared. If the lead agency finds that, pursuant to Guidelines Section 15162, no new effects could occur or new mitigation measures would be required, the activity can be approved as being within the scope of the Area Plan covered by the program EIR, and no new environmental documentation would be required. In this situation, the lead agency must incorporate all feasible mitigation measures from the program EIR into the subsequent project, as needed, to address significant or potentially significant effects on the environment covered by the program EIR.

A program EIR provides a regional consideration of cumulative effects and includes broad policy alternatives and program mitigation measures that are equally broad in scope. This program EIR provides a regional scale analysis and a framework of mitigation measures for subsequent, site-specific environmental review documents prepared by lead agencies in the region as individual planning, redevelopment and other projects are identified, designed and moved through the planning, review and decision-making process.

A program EIR may serve as a first-tier document for later CEQA review of individual projects included in the program. These project-specific CEQA reviews will focus on project-specific impacts and mitigation measures, and need not repeat the broad analyses contained in the program EIR. This document addresses environmental impacts to the level that they can be assessed without undue speculation (CEQA Guidelines Section 15145).

If a subsequent project or later activity consistent with the Area Plan would have effects that were not examined in this program EIR, an initial study would need to be prepared to determine the appropriate level of environmental review. If another environmental document is needed, whether it is a notice of exemption, negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or EIR, the program EIR can be used to simplify the task of preparing the subsequent environmental document, as indicated in Guidelines Section 15168(d). For

instance, regional influences, secondary effects, cumulative impacts, and broad alternatives that apply to the overall Area Plan can be incorporated by reference, allowing the later environmental document to focus solely on the new effects, such as site-specific environmental impacts related to project design that had not been previously considered in the program EIR. Any project-specific impacts that are too speculative to define at the program level would be resolved during CEQA review of individual projects.

TRPA has a similar process described in Section 6.2 of the Code of Ordinances. Section 6.2 describes that “when an EIS has been certified for a project or matter, TRPA should limit the EIS on a later related or consistent project or matter to effects that were not examined as significant effects in the prior EIS or that are susceptible to substantial reduction or avoidance by revisions in the project or matter through conditions of approval or mitigation.” Tiering is limited to situations where a later project or matter is consistent with a program, plan, policy, or ordinance for which an EIS was prepared, is consistent with applicable TRPA plans, and a supplemental EIS is not required.

1.5.2 Tahoe City Lodge

Following certification of the EIR/EIS, the Placer County Board of Supervisors will also select the alternative to approve for the Tahoe City Lodge project. The TRPA Governing Board will similarly consider lodge project approval following a decision by Placer County.

As a proposed planning document, approval of the Area Plan does not require issuance of project permits. The Tahoe City Lodge, however, will require issuance of project-specific permits and approvals, for which responsible agencies are expected to use the EIR/EIS. Permits and approvals that may be required for the Tahoe City Lodge project are listed in Table 1-2.

Table 1-2 Permits and Approvals for the Tahoe City Lodge Project

Permitting Agency	Permit Name	Purpose of Permit
Placer County	Conditional Use Permit	Required for land uses that are consistent with zoning to ensure compatibility with surrounding land uses
	Design Site Review	Review the design elements of the project for consistency with the design standards and guidelines for the area
	Improvement Permit	Grading and engineering work
	Building Permit	Building design compliance with Uniform Building Code
Tahoe Regional Planning Agency	TRPA Project Permit	TRPA Code compliance
Caltrans	Encroachment Permit	Required for any utility or other improvements that would occur within the SR 28 right-of-way
Tahoe City Public Utility District	Sewer Permit	Authorization for sewer connections
	Water Permit	Authorization for water connections
Reviewing Agency		Issue/Authority
Placer County Sheriff		Public safety
North Tahoe Fire Protection District		Fire safety
Franchise Utilities		
Southwest Gas Company, Liberty Utilities, Charter Business, and Tahoe Truckee Sanitation Agency		Public services
Source: Data compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2016		

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR/EIS

This Draft EIR/EIS evaluates 14 environmental resource areas and addresses other TRPA- and CEQA-mandated issues (e.g., cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, relationship between short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity). The environmental resource areas are as follows:

- ▲ Land Use
- ▲ Population and Housing
- ▲ Biological Resources
- ▲ Cultural and Historic Resources
- ▲ Scenic Resources
- ▲ Transportation and Circulation
- ▲ Air Quality
- ▲ Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- ▲ Noise and Vibration
- ▲ Geology, Soils, Land Capability, and Coverage
- ▲ Hydrology and Water Quality
- ▲ Public Services and Utilities
- ▲ Recreation
- ▲ Hazards, Hazardous Materials, and Risk of Upset

The Draft EIR/EIS is organized into the following chapters:

- ▲ *Chapter 1, "Introduction,"* includes the proposed project description, project location, agency roles and purpose of the EIR/EIS, environmental review process, intended uses of the EIR/EIS, organization of the EIR/EIS, and terminology used in the EIR/EIS.
- ▲ *Chapter 2, "Executive Summary,"* presents an overview of the proposed Area Plan, Kings Beach Center design concept, and Tahoe City Lodge; alternatives; areas of controversy; and a summary of the environment impacts and mitigation measures associated with each alternative.
- ▲ *Chapter 3, "Proposed Project and Alternatives,"* presents the four alternatives evaluated in this EIR/EIS. This chapter describes the alternatives development process, the specifics of each alternative, and project approvals and subsequent actions.
- ▲ *Chapter 4, "Approach to Environmental Analysis,"* describes the approach to the impact analyses in the resource chapters.
- ▲ *Chapters 5 through 18,* address the environmental resource categories listed above. Each chapter addresses:
 - Regulatory Setting – the applicable regulatory framework, including the federal, TRPA, state, regional, and local laws and regulations;
 - Environmental Setting – the existing conditions as they relate to the attributes of the environment that may be affected by the project;
 - Significance Criteria – the relevant local, state, and federal standards (e.g., water quality standards, air quality standards, zoning provisions) and other criteria by which a change in the environment can be assessed;
 - Analysis Methodology and Assumptions – disclosure of the resource-specific analysis methods and assumptions; and

- ▼ Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures – identifies and describes the methods and assumptions used in the environmental impact analysis. The anticipated changes to the existing environmental conditions resulting from construction and operation of the project are evaluated for each resource. The level of significance is identified for each impact based on a comparison with the significance criteria. For any significant or potentially significant impact that would result from project implementation, mitigation measures are presented with a discussion of the residual level of significance. Environmental impacts are numbered sequentially within each chapter (e.g., Impact 5-1, Impact 5-2, etc.). Any required mitigation measures are numbered to correspond to the impact; therefore, the mitigation measure for Impact 5-1 would be Mitigation Measure 5-1.
- ▲ Chapter 19, “Cumulative Impacts,” discusses the cumulative effects for each of the environmental resource categories in Chapter 5 through 18.
- ▲ Chapter 20, “Other CEQA- and TRPA-Mandated Sections,” includes growth-inducing impacts, relationship between short-term uses of the environment and maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources, significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided, CEQA Environmentally Superior Alternative, and TRPA Environmentally Preferable Alternative.
- ▲ Chapter 21, “Report Preparers,” identifies the Placer County, TRPA, and consultant staff who prepared the EIR/EIS.
- ▲ Chapter 22, “References,” includes the documents, references, and personal communications used as source material for this EIR/EIS, and identifies organizations and persons consulted during document preparation.
- ▲ Chapter 23, “Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program,” lists all mitigation measures in table format, along with the implementation, monitoring, and verification entities, and timing requirements for each measure.

1.7 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE EIR/EIS

The EIR/EIS includes the following terminology to denote the significance of environmental impacts of the proposed project and alternatives:

- ▲ *No Impact:* Actions do not result in adverse effects.
- ▲ *Beneficial Impact:* An impact that would result in improved environmental conditions.
- ▲ *Less-than-Significant Impact:* An impact that is adverse but not substantial and does not exceed the defined significance criteria. Less-than-significant impacts do not require mitigation.
- ▲ *Significant Impact:* an impact that exceeds defined significance criteria and would or could cause a substantial adverse change in the environment. Potentially feasible mitigation measures or alternatives are recommended to eliminate the impact, reduce it to a less-than-significant level, or reduce it to the degree feasible.
- ▲ *Potentially Significant Impact:* An impact for which information may not be definitive, but which may be or is likely to be significant. For purposes of the EIR/EIS analysis, a potentially significant impact is equivalent to a significant impact and requires feasible mitigation measures or alternatives.

- ▲ *Significant and Unavoidable Impact:* A substantial adverse effect on the environment that cannot be feasibly mitigated to a less-than-significant level or reduced to a less-than-significant level by adoption of a feasible alternative.
- ▲ *Significance Criteria:* A criterion established by the lead agency to define at what level an impact would be considered significant (i.e., if an impact exceeds the defined criterion, it would be considered significant).
- ▲ *Mitigation Measure:* A measure that could feasibly avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for a significant effect. Mitigation measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments. Compliance with TRPA Codes, state and federal laws, or other regulations, including potential actions to achieve such compliance may be sufficient mitigation in instances in which compliance would be reasonably expected to avoid, minimize, and/or compensate for the environmental impact.