



**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE AGENCY**  
**PLANNING SERVICES DIVISION**  
County of Placer

**HEARING DATE:** May 24, 2018  
**ITEM NO.:** 1  
**TIME:** 10:05 AM

**TO:** Placer County Planning Commission  
**FROM:** Development Review Committee  
**DATE:** May 8, 2018  
**SUBJECT: SQUAW VALLEY / ALPINE MEADOWS BASE-TO-BASE GONDOLA  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT / ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
REPORT (PLN15-00398) – PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT  
SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICT 5 (MONTGOMERY)**

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**COMMUNITY PLAN AREA:** Squaw Valley General Plan and Land Use Ordinance, and Alpine Meadows General Plan

**GENERAL / COMMUNITY PLAN DESIGNATION:** Open Space, Recreation / Conservation for Squaw Valley; Ski Area and Greenbelt for Alpine Meadows

**ZONING:** FR (Forest Recreation District) for Squaw Valley; OS (Open Space) and C1 (Neighborhood Commercial) for Alpine Meadows

**ASSESSOR PARCEL NUMBER:** 095-190-005-000, 095-280-033-000, 095-280-034-000, 095-290-025-000, 095-290-026-000, 095-290-027-000, 095-290-028-000, 095-290-029-000, 096-101-027-000, 096-020-027-000, 096-221-036-000, 096-221-038-000

**STAFF PLANNER:** Heather Beckman, Senior Planner

**LOCATION:** The project spans both Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows General Plan areas. Squaw Valley, also known as Olympic Valley, encompasses approximately 4,700 acres and is located west of State Route 89 (SR 89), approximately nine miles south of the Town of Truckee, and seven miles northwest of Tahoe City and Lake Tahoe. Alpine Meadows encompasses approximately 3,600 acres of land 12 miles south of the town of Truckee and five miles northwest of Tahoe City. The 47.21-acre project site is located on the east side of Alpine Meadows Road, three miles southwest of the intersection of Alpine Meadows Road and State Route 89. The project spans both privately and publicly held lands.

**APPLICANT:** Squaw Valley Ski Holdings (SVSH)

**PURPOSE OF DRAFT EIS/EIR PUBLIC HEARING:** CEQA Guidelines Section 15087 (i), Public Review of Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), states: "Public hearings may be conducted on the environmental documents, either in separate proceedings or in conjunction with other proceedings of the public agency. Public hearings are encouraged...as part of the CEQA process."

As part of the County's environmental review process, a public hearing on the Draft Environmental Impact Report is held during the 45-day public review period to encourage public comment and community participation. The public hearing provides responsible and trustee agencies, residents, civic organizations and other interested parties with an opportunity to provide comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. The 45-day public review period for this project began on April 27, 2018 and ends at 5:00 pm on June 11, 2018.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive comments on the adequacy of the Draft EIS/EIR. The County and United States Forest Service (FS) environmental consultants will be present to record comments so they can be responded to in the Final EIS/EIR. This meeting is not an opportunity to discuss the merits of the project, as that discussion will occur at a subsequent hearing on the project entitlements.

All parties who attend the Draft EIS/EIR public comment hearing may provide verbal or written comments. Parties who submit comments during the hearing or within the comment period will receive a written "Response to Comments" that is contained in the Final EIS/EIR. These same persons will also receive notification of the subsequent hearings to be held on the discretionary permit application.

#### Joint CEQA / NEPA Review

As this project crosses public lands under jurisdiction of the Tahoe National Forest and the United States Forest Service (FS), the project is also subject to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As such, the two agencies are conducting a joint EIS/EIR review process that satisfies both the state (i.e. CEQA) and federal (i.e. NEPA) requirements. Although the County and FS are conducting this cooperative review, separate decisions will be issued by each agency. It is worthy of noting that unlike CEQA, NEPA requires that all action alternatives are analyzed at a co-equal level. In other words, the gondola alignment proposed by the applicant (i.e. Alternative 2) and the two action alternatives (i.e. Alternatives 3 and 4) have been designed and engineered, and the resource studies were conducted and analyzed, to an equal level. This co-equal analysis affords the decision-makers (i.e. Placer County Board of Supervisors for the EIR, and Tahoe National Forest Supervisor for the EIS) sufficient information to approve, condition, or deny any of the three action alternatives. Please see DEIS/EIR Chapter 3 for further discussion on the CEQA and NEPA processes.

FS staff will be present at the Planning Commission meeting to answer clarifying questions and to hear public comment. All comments received by Placer County during the 45 day public comment period will be shared with the FS and responded to in the Final EIS/EIR, and vice versa. It is important to note, however, that in order to have legal standing under which to be eligible to file an objection on the Forest Service Draft Record of Decision (ROD), the commenter must provide their full name and postal address.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICES AND REFERRAL FOR COMMENTS**

Public notices were mailed to property owners of record within 300 feet of the project site and all those individuals, civic organizations and entities that specifically requested notice of this project including all persons and parties that commented on the Notice of Preparation / Notice of Intent. In addition, notice was provided to the North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council (NTRAC), Squaw Valley Municipal Advisory Council (SVMAC), responsible agencies, including but not limited to the Alpine Springs Community Water District, Squaw Valley Public Service District, Squaw Valley Fire Department and the North Tahoe Fire Protection District, and trustee agencies to which copies of the Notice of Availability and of the DEIS/EIR were transmitted for review and comment. The DEIS/EIR was filed with the State Clearinghouse on April 27, 2018 (State Clearinghouse Number 2014042028) and the Federal Register (Vol. 83, No. 82 / Notices). Public comments will be received during the comment period, which occurs from April 27, 2018 and ends at 5:00 pm June 11, 2018.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Base-to-Base Gondola project (recently named the California Express Gondola by the applicant) proposes to install and operate an aerial ropeway system, or gondola, that connects the base areas of the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows ski resorts. The project includes two gondola terminals (one at each of the ski resort base areas), two mid-stations and associated ski towers that cross over the ridgeline between the two ski resorts. The proposed lift would be configured as an eight-passenger gondola and have a design capacity of approximately 1,400 persons per hour in each direction. The travel time between the two resorts is approximately 16 minutes. The gondola would operate in the winter/ski season only, which for this project is defined as the period when both the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows Ski Areas are in operation for winter sports (based on past operations, Alpine Meadows, on

average, closes on approximately April 16<sup>th</sup>). The gondola connection between Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley would not be operational beyond this date unless both resorts are open for the ski season to the public. The Squaw Valley portion of the gondola that can operate independently (i.e. the portion from the Squaw Valley terminal to the Squaw Valley mid-station) may remain open until the closure of the Squaw Valley winter sports operations. The gondola would typically operate each day from just before Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley open until shortly after closing (approximately 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), and the existing shuttle bus system that currently provides transportation between Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows would not operate when the gondola is open. Although non-skier patrons may purchase tickets to ride the gondola between the resorts, only skiers and snowboarders (collectively referred to as skiers for the remainder of this report) will be allowed to disembark at the mid-stations. With the proposed gondola project, 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. These would translate to six full-time-employee-equivalent (FTEE) positions.

### Project Area and Land Ownership

The gondola is proposed in an area with complex property ownership and designations. The Squaw Valley resort is operated almost entirely on privately owned land. The majority of Alpine Meadows resort, however, is located on National Forest System (NFS) land and is operated under a Special Use Permit (SUP) with the Tahoe National Forest. Between them is the “Caldwell property”, a private parcel through which the proposed gondola must traverse for the two resorts to be connected. The federally managed and protected Granite Chief Wilderness (GCW) is located immediately west of the proposed gondola alignment. The eastern Caldwell property line abuts the GCW, and a portion of the congressionally mapped GCW (discussed below) extends eastward onto the Caldwell property (Figure 1).

The privately owned lands within the congressionally mapped GCW make up a 54.6 acre “bulge” that extends from the National Forest System-GCW onto the Caldwell property (see yellow dashed markings on Figure 1 below). The federal Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits development on national forest lands contained within congressionally mapped wilderness areas, with a primary goal of maintaining the untrammled, natural and undeveloped quality of said lands, and to maintain the outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined types of recreation that exist on these lands (see DEIS/EIR Chapter 4.3 for full discussion). In 1984, Congress issued the California Wilderness Act of 1984, which identified a 25,256-acre area as the Granite Chief Wilderness. Within the congressionally mapped GCW are 177 acres of privately owned land (including the “bulge” described above) that are not afforded the protections of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act of 1964 directed that the FS would attempt to acquire these privately held lands contained within congressionally mapped wilderness areas so that they could be afforded the protections of the Wilderness Act of 1964. At the time of this writing, the 54.6 acre “bulge” on the Caldwell property has not been acquired by the FS and remains under private ownership. As such, the land use management direction and restrictions imposed by the federal Wilderness Act of 1964 do not apply to these lands (or any of the 177 acres of privately owned land within the congressionally mapped GCW). Development is permissible on these privately held lands.

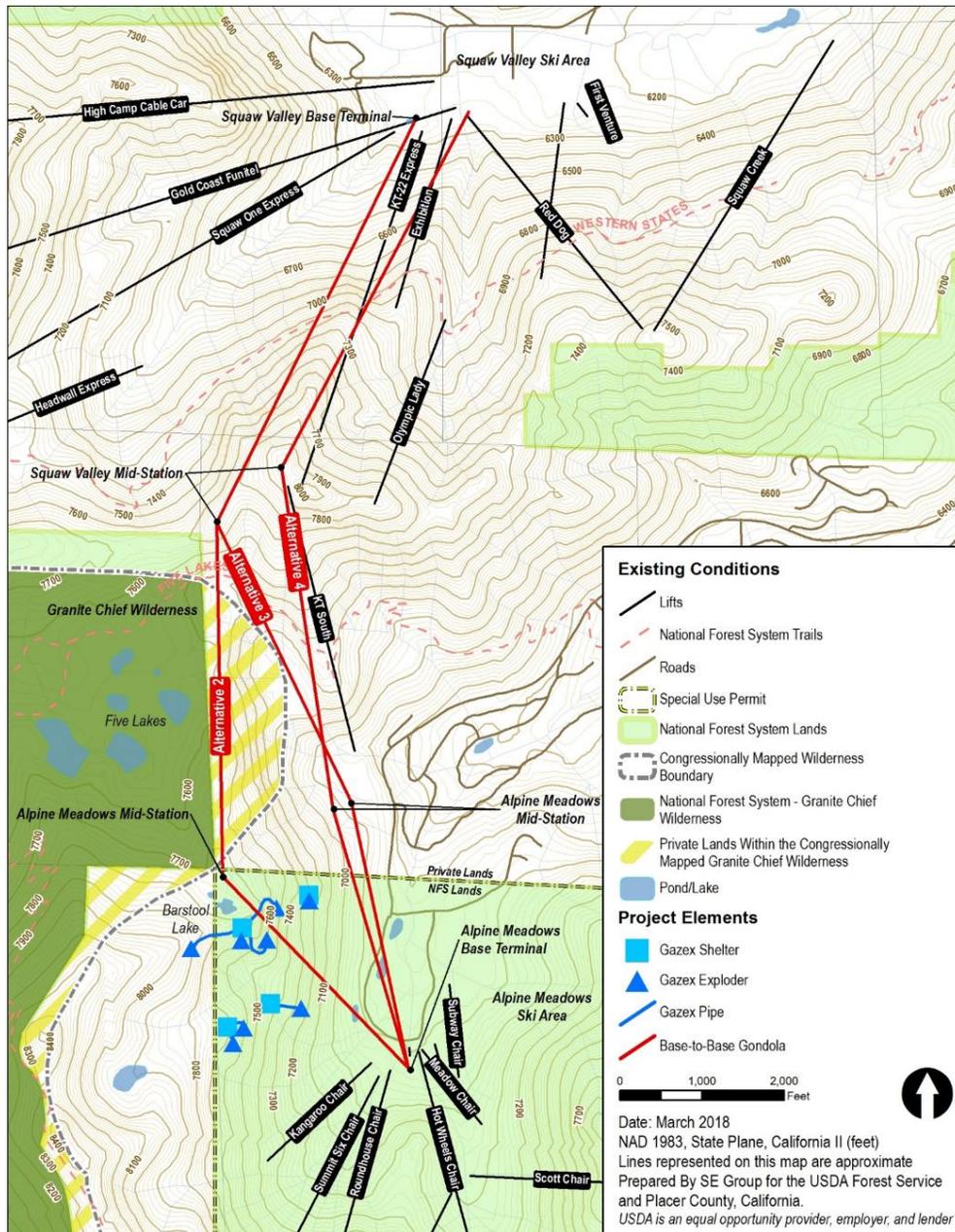
### Alternatives - Gondola Alignments

Four alternatives (i.e. gondola alignments) were studied for this project; a no project alternative (Alternative 1), the applicant’s proposed alignment (Alternative 2) and two additional alignments developed as required under CEQA and NEPA to analyze a range of alternatives. Numerous other gondola alignments, as well as non-ski lift means to provide connectivity between the two resorts, were also considered by the agencies and ultimately were not incorporated as alternatives for study (see Figure 1 below and DEIS/EIR Chapter 2.3 for further discussion). The Alternatives are further described below and shown in Figure 1:

1. Alternative 1 - No Action Alternative (i.e. no development)
2. Alternative 2 – The gondola alignment proposed by the applicant and the westernmost alignment

3. Alternative 3 – Slightly more eastern alignment with the same Squaw Valley terminal and mid-station. The Alpine Meadows mid-station is located farther to the east than Alternative 2.
4. Alternative 4 – The most eastern alignment in which the Squaw Valley terminal and both mid-stations are located farther to the east as compared to Alternative 2.

Unlike CEQA, NEPA requires that all action alternatives are analyzed at a co-equal level. In other words, the gondola alignment proposed by the applicant (i.e. Alternative 2) and the two action alternatives (i.e. Alternatives 3 and 4) have been designed and engineered, and the resource studies were conducted and analyzed, to an equal level. This co-equal analysis affords the decision-makers (i.e. Placer County Board of Supervisors for the EIR, and Tahoe National Forest Supervisor for the EIS) sufficient information to approve, condition or deny any of the three action alternatives. Please see DEIS/EIR Chapter 3 for further discussion on the CEQA and NEPA processes.



**Figure 1: Gondola alternatives; land ownership and designations**

All three action alternative alignments span both private and public lands; crossing over the ridgeline that separates the two ski resorts. All alignments cross over the following land ownership:

- Squaw Valley or northern gondola segment – owned by Squaw Valley Ski Holdings
- Ridgeline or middle segment - private lands owned by Troy Caldwell (i.e. Caldwell property)
- Alpine Meadows or southern gondola segment - National Forest System lands (NFS)

As mentioned previously, a lift terminal would be located within the base area of each ski resort (i.e. one terminal at Squaw Valley and one terminal at Alpine Meadows). A terminal has a 24 foot by 84 foot footprint and is approximately 30 feet tall (i.e. similar to existing terminals at the resorts such as KT-22 and Summit Six). Two mid-stations are proposed along the gondola alignment; one each on the Squaw Valley and Alpine Meadows portions of the alignment. A mid-station is comprised of two lift terminals placed end-to-end so as to create an angle that redirects the linear aerial ropeway over the ridge and to the base terminals.

Both base terminals serve as primary drive stations for the lift, meaning that each base terminal provides the necessary power for the gondola to operate. In addition, each side of the gondola would be capable of operating independently if the other half of the system were not operational; that is, the segment from the Squaw Valley base terminal to the Squaw Valley mid-station could operate (powered by the Squaw Valley base terminal) even if the Alpine Meadows portion of the gondola were not operational, and the Alpine Meadows base terminal to the Alpine Meadows mid-station could operate (powered by the Alpine Meadows base terminal) even if the Squaw Valley portion of the gondola were not operational. The purpose of this is to allow for skiing from the respective mid-stations if one resort is closed and the other is open. The base stations would be powered via existing utility infrastructure at the respective resorts, no utility infrastructure is required to be installed to power the mid-stations.

The gondola cabins would be colored white to blend with the natural environment during winter and minimize visual impacts. While the gondola is not in operation during the summer months, cabins would be removed from the line and stored at the base terminals. Gondola cabins could also be stored off the ropeway at night during the winter, particularly during storm or wind events. Cabin storage would be provided at both base terminals in aboveground, enclosed structures. Approximately 40 percent of the cabins would be stored at Squaw Valley and 60 percent would be stored at Alpine Meadows. To perform maintenance, some cabins would need to be put on the line for limited periods during the summer (fewer than 10 times during the summer for running all cars on the line, and 3–5 days per month for limited numbers of cars moved across the line). The base terminal color and material have not been identified, but are subject to the design review requirements of both the County and Forest Service.

Lighting would be required at the terminals to allow for maintenance outside of normal operating hours, and to prepare for daily operations. Lighting fixtures would be shielded and directed downward such that the bulb or ballast is not visible. The gondola cabins would have internal communications and emergency lights, but they would not be operable by the passengers.

Snowmaking is not proposed for the Alpine Meadows or Squaw Valley mid-stations and grooming around the mid-stations would occur on an as-needed basis (typically after snow and wind events) by snow shoveling and snow cat grooming. Squaw Valley Ski Holdings has committed to completing all ground disturbing activities and construction of the gondola alignment in a single construction season.

### ***Alternative 2***

Under Alternative 2, the Squaw Valley terminal would be located between Cushing Pond and the KT Sundeck. A hardscape connection would extend from the KT sundeck to the terminal. An enclosed cabin storage facility (able to house 40 percent of the gondola cabins) would be located southeast of the proposed terminal, and between the proposed terminal and the existing KT-22 lift.

The Squaw Valley mid-station would be located in the KT Saddle and near Skunk Rock. The Alpine Meadows mid-station would be located adjacent to Barstool Lake and above The Buttress area on NFS lands. Alternative 2 is the closest alignment to the GCW. Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows ticket-holding skiers could load/unload and ski from both mid-stations. For this alternative, although the gondola could still run throughout the duration of the winter/ski season (as further defined in the Operations section below), the Alpine Meadows mid-station would not allow skiers to disembark from April 15<sup>th</sup> onward so as to minimize the potential for adverse effects on Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (SNYLF). This alignment is located entirely within SNYLF critical habitat and near Barstool Lake (i.e. occupied SNYLF habitat).

The Alpine Meadows base terminal, for all three alternatives, is located between the Roundhouse and Hot Wheels Chair lifts. Grading and importation of approximately 7,500 cubic yards of material is included in the base terminal design to improve the connectivity between the base lodge and the Summit and Roundhouse lifts. For all three alternatives, an enclosed cabin storage facility would be located to the east of the proposed terminal and would house 60 percent of the gondola cabins.

In total, the lift would be approximately 13,000 feet in length (based on construction plan length), of which approximately 3,300 feet (25 percent) would be sited on NFS lands, including the Alpine Meadows mid-station and the Alpine Meadows base terminal. It is estimated that this alignment requires 35 lift towers (24 on private lands and 11 on NFS lands) and approximately 20 acres of disturbance.

### ***Alternative 3***

Under Alternative 3, the Squaw Valley base terminal would be located in a similar location between Cushing Pond and the KT Sundeck and have a similar hardscape connector between the terminal and the KT sundeck as in Alternative 2.

The Squaw Valley mid-station would be located in the same vicinity as Alternative 2 (i.e. in the KT Saddle and near Skunk Rock). The Alpine Meadows mid-station, however, would be located farther to the east of Alternative 2 and within "Catch Valley" of the Caldwell property and near the one existing residence on the property. This alignment moves the gondola farther away from the GCW and outside of the congressionally mapped Granite Chief Wilderness Area, and although it is still entirely within SNYLF critical habitat, it is farther away from Barstool Lake and occupied habitat. Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows ticket-holding skiers could both load and unload at the Squaw Valley mid-station and only owners and guests of the privately-owned Caldwell property would be allowed to load and unload at the Alpine Meadows mid-station.

The Alpine Meadows base terminal and cabin storage, with the exception of a small rotation of the terminal, are in the same location as Alternative 2.

In total, the lift would be approximately 12,600 feet in length (based on construction plan length), of which approximately 2,400 feet (20 percent) would be sited on NFS lands. It is estimated that this alignment requires 34 lift towers (29 on private lands and five on NFS lands) and approximately 14.7 acres of disturbance.

### ***Alternative 4***

Under Alternative 4, the Squaw Valley terminal would be located in the vicinity of the existing Red Dog ski lift terminal. The alignment of the existing Red Dog lift terminal may need to be altered to accommodate the Squaw Valley base terminal. An enclosed cabin storage facility is proposed to the east of the Squaw Valley base terminal.

The Squaw Valley mid-station would be located on the Olympic Ridge and west of the top of the existing KT-22 lift. The Alpine Meadows mid-station would be located slightly more west than in

Alternative 3 and even farther away from of the congressionally mapped Granite Chief Wilderness Area than Alternatives 2 and 3. Portions of this alignment fall outside of the SNYLF critical habitat and this alignment is the farthest away from Barstool Lake where a frog was observed. Construction of this mid-station would require approximately 25,000 cubic yards of excavation of which 5,000 cubic yards would remain on site. Similar to Alternative 3, Squaw Valley/Alpine Meadows ticket-holding skiers could both load and unload at the Squaw Valley mid-station and only owners and guests of the privately-owned Caldwell property would be allowed to both load and unload at the Alpine Meadows mid-station.

In total, the lift would be approximately 11,700 feet in length (based on construction plan length), of which approximately 2,300 feet (20 percent) would be sited on NFS lands. It is estimated that this alignment requires 33 lift towers (28 on private lands and five on NFS lands) and approximately 14.2 acres of disturbance.

#### Gazex Exploders (i.e. Avalanche Control) Associated with Alpine Meadows

Current avalanche mitigation at Alpine Meadows includes the use of remote artillery and hand shot placements (explosive charges placed by hand) under “The Buttress” area (i.e. below the Alternative 2 Alpine Meadows mid-station). Installation of the Alternative 2 alignment under current avalanche mitigation procedures would pose a risk of direct artillery and indirect shrapnel damaging the gondola infrastructure. As such, the project proposes to install, operate, and maintain up to eight Gazex exploders (seven on NFS lands) to perform avalanche mitigation in the area. Although there is only a threat to gondola infrastructure under Alternative 2, the Gazex exploders are proposed as part of all action alternatives to improve the existing avalanche mitigation program.

Gazex is a permanent and remote avalanche control system that operates without explosives. The blast is caused by the detonation of a propane and oxygen mixture; creating a concussive blast above the snow surface in key avalanche trigger locations. The ignition is controlled remotely. Installation of the Gazex exploders would require two concrete footers for anchoring (Figure 2). The upper concrete footing would be approximately 3.5 feet by 8 feet, with a total construction disturbance area of approximately 15 feet by 15 feet. The lower concrete footing would be approximately 5 by 5 feet, with a total construction disturbance area of approximately 7 feet by 7 feet. The construction disturbance required for each exploder would vary depending on its location. Any material disturbed for the footers would be replaced or scattered on site. The exploder tubes would be approximately 15–16 feet in length to ensure the opening remains above the snow surface. The exploders would be a dark galvanized color.



Typical Gazex Exploder



Typical Gazex Shelter

**Figure 2**

Operation of the Gazex exploders would require four shelters to house propane and oxygen tanks. Each shelter would be approximately 7 feet by 7 feet and would be set on a small aboveground platform (approximately 120 square feet), anchored for stability. The construction disturbance area would be approximately 200 square feet. The shelters would be constructed of wood and steel covered in fiberglass and include an antenna approximately 22 feet tall. The shelters would be white and would be designed to blend visually with the surrounding environment to the maximum extent possible. From each shelter, one or more 1- to 2-inch-diameter high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe would transmit the combustible gases (pressure fed) to the exploder.

Alpine Meadows would ensure that all combustible gasses are depleted or removed from each shelter at the end of the ski season by over-the-snow vehicles such as snowmobiles or snow cats. Resupply would be conducted over-the-snow or via helicopter immediately prior to the ski season. These facilities would require the storage of propane and oxygen, therefore appropriate spill and fire prevention measures would be developed and incorporated into the project to ensure compliance with regulations promulgated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and state and local agencies

### **CEQA (PLACER COUNTY) / NEPA (U.S. FOREST SERVICE) APPROVAL PROCESSES**

Following is a brief overview of the County CEQA and Federal NEPA approval processes and the sequencing of next steps after the close of the DEIS/EIR public comment period on June 11, 2018. As was mentioned previously, the joint EIS/EIR serves the respective needs of the agencies to analyze and make a determination on the environmental effects of the gondola project and to identify mitigation measures to reduce those impacts. Placer County and FS staff are currently engaged in discussions to determine the sequencing of meetings, hearings and steps in our respective approval processes once we get to the release of the Final EIS/EIR.

#### Placer County / CEQA Process and Entitlements

1. **Draft EIS/EIR** – Jointly released by Forest Service and Placer County – 45 day public comment period (i.e. April 27, 2018 to June 11, 2018)
2. **Final EIS/EIR** – Placer County and FS prepare a joint Final EIS/EIR to respond to comments and/or issues raised by comment
3. **Municipal Advisory Councils** – Staff will present the FEIS/EIR to both the North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council and Squaw Valley Municipal Advisory Council for recommendation to the Planning Commission.
4. **Planning Commission** – The Planning Commission will make a recommendation on certification of the FEIS/EIR and entitlements (see below) to the Board of Supervisors.
5. **Board of Supervisors** – The Board of Supervisors (BOS) will take action on the following. The BOS may approve, deny or condition any of the action alternatives.
  - Certification of a Final Environmental Impact Report
  - Approval of a Conditional Use Permit for a ski lift facility
  - Approval of a Rezoning to modify the boundary of the OS (Open Space) and C1 (Neighborhood Commercial) for Alpine Meadows to allow for the base terminal
  - Approval of a General Plan Amendment to the Squaw Valley General Plan to add the lift to the “Potential Future Ski Lifts”
6. **Notice of Determination** – A Notice of Determination is filed with the County Clerk and OPR.

#### U.S. Forest Service / NEPA Approval Process

1. **Draft EIS/EIR** – Jointly released by Forest Service and Placer County – 45 day public comment period runs from April 27, 2018 to June 11, 2018. (The Forest Service does not hold any formal public hearings or forum for oral comments).
2. **Final EIS/EIR and Response to Comments (RTC)**
  - Placer County and FS prepare a joint Final EIS/EIR to respond to comments and/or issues raised by comment

- In addition to, and separate from the FEIS/EIR, NEPA requires a written response to every comment (RTC). This document accompanies the draft record of decision (ROD) (see below) and is typically packaged as an attachment to the FEIS/EIR
3. **Draft Record of Decision (ROD)** – Released by the FS and is generally concurrent with the FEIS/EIR. This document presents the Forest Supervisor’s decision, subject to objection, for the project. For this project, this decision may include acceptance of one of the alternatives (including the No Action Alternative), as well as additional conditions of approval or resource protection measures. Any additions must fall within the purview of the analysis of the DEIS/EIR. The Draft ROD is based on, and refers to, the DEIS/EIR and FEIS/EIR, and in addition to the decision, provides a rationale upon which that decision was based.
  4. **Pre-decisional Objection Period** – Release of Draft ROD triggers a 45 day pre-decisional objection period.
    - There are no public hearings associated with this objection period; there are no additional opportunities for additional public comment during this period.
    - Any person or entity who has legal standing (i.e. as established through their comment submitted on the DEIS/EIR) can file an objection
  5. **Objection Filed** – If an objection is filed, the FS must offer to meet with the objector to discuss the objection; resolution to the objection is not required. FS regulations provide guidance to attempt to address the objection within 45 days of the closing of the pre-decisional objection period, but it may go beyond.
  6. **Issuance of Final ROD** – Subject to the objection process, this document can revise the original decision and/or rationale, as well as include additional project modifications, conditions of approval or resource protection measures. Any additions must fall within the purview of the analysis of the DEIS/EIR.

Approvals Required By Responsible Or Trustee Agencies

**Federal**

- Any U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: Compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act if discharge of fill to waters of the United States occurs and /or if any wetlands are identified and cannot be avoided by the project.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Concurrence with Clean Water Act Section 404 permit if waters of the United States and wetlands cannot be fully avoided.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Compliance with Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

**State**

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Region 2: Compliance with the California Endangered Species Act; potential permits under Section 2081 of the California Fish and Game Code if take of listed species is likely to occur; Section 1602 streambed alteration agreement if any construction activities occur within the bed or bank of adjacent waterways. California State Office of Historic Preservation: Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (in coordination with the Forest Service).
- Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System construction stormwater permit (notice of intent to proceed under general construction permit) for disturbance of more than 1 acre, discharge permit for stormwater, and Clean Water Act Section 401 water quality certification or waste discharge requirements.

**Local**

- Placer County Air Pollution Control District: Authority to construct (for devices that emit air pollutants); permit to operate; air quality management plan consistency determination.

**SCOPE OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIS/EIR)**

At the initial phases of the gondola project, the agencies opted to have separate CEQA and NEPA processes. Placer County issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on April 22, 2016 with a 30 day review period ending May 23, 2016. The United States Forest Service issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) on April 29, 2016 with a 30 day review period ending May 31, 2016. Following the close of the public scoping

periods, Placer County and the Forest Service decided to join the CEQA and NEPA processes. A joint Notice of Preparation (NOP) and Notice of Intent (NOI) for this DEIS/EIR was issued on September 2, 2016 and public comment closed on October 3, 2016. The NOP/NOI provides a preliminary evaluation of the possible environmental impacts resulting from development and operation of the proposed project. This DEIS/EIR presents information concerning the environmental setting of the project area, identifies the project's potential impacts to the environment, and recommends mitigation measures to reduce these impacts.

As required by the Tahoe National Forest NEPA process, and to minimize potential environmental impacts from construction and implementation of the action alternatives, resource protection measures (RPMs) have been incorporated into all three action alternatives. Many of the RPMs are construction and operational best management practices, standards and requirements that County typically requires of similar types of projects. Refer to Appendix B of the DEIS/EIR for a comprehensive list of the RPMs.

For the CEQA analysis, the significance of impacts was determined before the implementation of RPMs. The analysis then determined whether the RPMs would reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level. If significant impacts would remain significant after consideration of applicable RPMs, additional mitigation measures were added, as feasible, to further reduce the impact. All RPMs, as well as any supplemental mitigation measures necessary to further reduce environmental impacts, will also be mitigation measures and included in the Placer County mitigation monitoring and reporting program, and their implementation will be ensured by the CUP's conditions of approval. All RPMs are considered roughly proportional and have an essential nexus to the impacts they reduce.

#### Resources / Issues Dismissed from Further Documentation in DEIS/EIR

The DEIS/EIR found that for all action alternatives, impacts (before the application of RPMs or mitigation measures) to the following environmental resource areas would not occur:

- Agriculture and Forest Resources (as Defined by CEQA)
- Mineral Resources
- Cultural Resources<sup>1</sup>
- Population and Housing
- Public Services

There are two areas included in the DEIS/EIR, Wilderness and Socioeconomic and Environmental Justice, that are required to be analyzed for NEPA purposes only (see DEIS/EIR Chapters 4.3 and 4.5 respectively for additional information).

#### Less Than Significant Impacts Without RPMs and/or Mitigation Measures

The Draft EIS/EIR identified that the following project impacts would be less than significant before the implementation of RPMs and/or mitigation measures identified in the DEIS/EIR, and therefore are not discussed further in this staff report. If one or more alternatives had a significant impact prior to the implementation of RPMs, even if the other alternatives were less than significant, that impact area is not listed below and is discussed in a later section of this report. Discussion of the impacts are not presented in this report, but can be found in *Chapter 4* of the DEIS/EIR.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on cultural resources surveys of the project area conducted in 2015 and 2016 (which included searches of available records, pedestrian archaeological surveys, and contacts with the local tribal representative), there are no archaeological or historic (e.g., historic buildings, foundations) resources on the site of any of the action alternatives and no evidence of paleontological resources occurring in the project area. It is highly unlikely that currently unknown subsurface cultural resources could be located in the project area given the steep slopes found within of much of the project area, preponderance of exposed granite, and previous ground disturbance in the locations of the base terminals. Although there is no evidence that cultural or paleontological resources occur on the project site, there are Resource Protection Measures (RPMs) that would be applied to all action alternatives addressing the potential for encountering previously unknown cultural and paleontological resources and evaluation and protection of these finds.

- Recreation
- Public Safety
- Utilities
- Air quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change
- Botany

#### Less Than Significant Impacts With RPMs and/or Mitigation Measures

The Draft EIS/EIR identified that the following project impacts would be reduced to less than significant with the implementation of RPMs and/or mitigation measures identified in the DEIS/EIR. Below is a list of those impact areas. Discussion of the impacts and mitigation measures can be found in *Chapter 4* of the DEIS/EIR.

- Visual Resources (Chapter 4.2)
  - Night Lighting and Glare
- Land Use (Chapter 4.4)
  - Consistency with Relevant Federal and Local Rules and Regulations (Impact 4.4.-1)
- Transportation and Circulation (Chapter 4.7)
  - Impacts on Placer County Intersections (Impact 4.7-2)
  - Impacts on Vehicle Safety Related to Roadway Design Features (Impact 4.7-7)
  - Construction Impacts on Transportation Facilities (Impact 4.7-8)
  - Cumulative Impacts on Placer County Roadways (Impact 4.7-9)
  - Cumulative Impacts on Placer County Intersections (Impact 4.7-10)
  - Cumulative Impacts on Vehicle Safety Related to Roadway Design Features (Impact 4.7-15)
- Noise (Chapter 4.9)
  - Exposure of Existing Sensitive Receptors to Operational Noise from Proposed Gazex Exploders and Gondola (Impact 4.9-3)
- Vegetation (Chapter 4.12)
  - Adverse Effect on Any Riparian Habitat or Other Sensitive Natural Community (Impact 4.12-2)
  - Conflict with Any Local Policies or Ordinances Protecting Biological Resources (Impact 4.12-3)
- Wildlife and Aquatics (Chapter 4.14)
  - Direct and Indirect Effects on Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog (Impact 4.14-1)
  - Direct and Indirect Effects on Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog Critical Habitat (Impact 4.14.-2)
  - Direct and Indirect Effects on Southern Long-Toed Salamander (Impact 4.14-3)
  - Direct and Indirect Effects on Special-Status Terrestrial Wildlife (Impact 4.14-5)
  - Disturbance or Loss of Wildlife Movement, Wildlife Corridors, and Native Wildlife Nursery Sites (Impact 4.14-6)
- Wetlands (Chapter 4.15)
  - Loss and Degradation of Wetlands and Other Waters (Impact 4.15-1)
- Geology and Seismicity (Chapter 4.16)
  - Exposure of People and Structures to Mass Wasting Events (Impact 4.16-1)
  - Exposure of People and Structures to Avalanches (Impact 14.6-2)
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Chapter 4.17)
  - Impacts from Erosion and Sedimentation Caused by Construction-Related Activities (Impact 4.17-1)
  - Localized Flooding from Changes in Site Drainage Patterns (Impact 4.17-5)

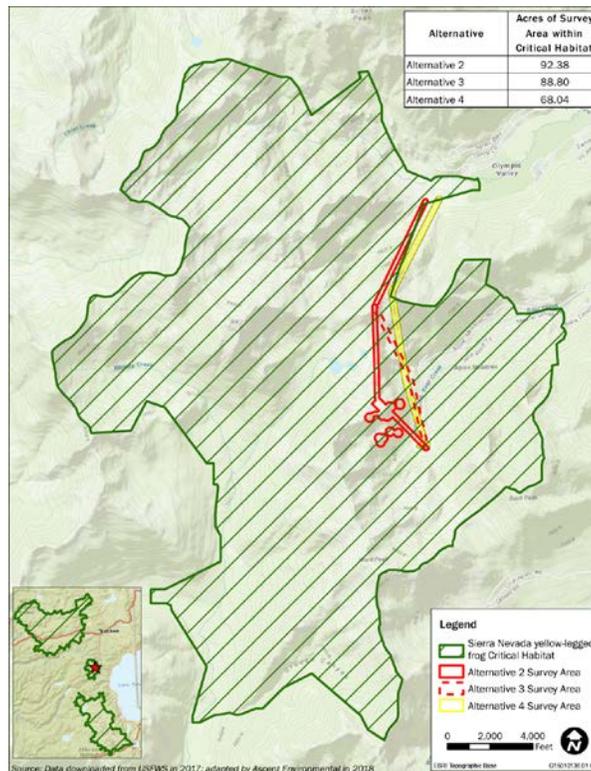
### Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

The DEIS/EIR has identified six significant and unavoidable impacts to the environmental resource areas for all three action alternatives noted below. These project impacts would remain significant and unavoidable even with implementation of RPMs and/or mitigation measures identified in the DEIS/EIR. A summary of these impacts is discussed below, and a full discussion of the impacts, RPMS and mitigation measures can be found in *Chapter 4* of the DEIS/EIR.

- Visual Resources (Chapter 4.2)
  - Visual Character (Impact 4.2-2)
- Transportation and Circulation (Chapter 4.7)
  - Impacts on Vehicular Queuing at Caltrans Intersections (Impact 4.7-4)
  - Impacts on Caltrans Intersections (Cumulative) (Impact 4.7-11)
  - Impacts on Vehicular Queuing at Caltrans Intersections (Cumulative) (Impact 4.7-12)
  - Impacts on Caltrans Highways (Cumulative) (Impact 4.7-13)
- Noise (Chapter 4.9)
  - Construction Noise Impacts (Impact 4.9-1)

### Sierra Nevada Yellow Legged Frog

Although environmental impacts are discussed in greater detail of Chapter 4.14 of the DEIS/EIR, it is worthy of noting that in August of 2016 (approximately one year after this project was formally submitted to Placer County and FS), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service issued the critical habitat mapping for the endangered Sierra Nevada yellow legged frog (SNYLF). Furthermore, during field studies associated with this DEIS/EIR a SNYLF was observed in Barstool Lake. Information on this critical resource, as well as public comments made during the scoping process, greatly contributed to the development of the Alternative 3 and 4 alignments/paths. Alternatives 2 and 3 are located fully within the SNYLF critical habitat, whereas portions of the Alternative 4 alignment are outside of the habitat (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Sierra Nevada Yellow-Legged Frog Critical Habitat in the Study Area**

### **SIGNIFICANT AND UNAVOIDABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

For those impacts that are determined to be significant and unavoidable, Section 21100(b)(2)(A) of the State CEQA Guidelines provides that an EIR shall include a detailed statement setting forth “in a

separate section: any significant effect on the environment that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented.” For brevity of this staff report, the discussion below is specific to those impacts that are determined to be significant and unavoidable. Discussion of impacts that would be reduced to a less than significant level with the implementation of RPMs and/or mitigation measures can be found in Chapter 4 of the DEIS/EIR.

#### Chapter 4.2 – Visual Resources

##### ***Impact 4.2-2 Visual Character (General Impact on Visual Character)***

The following background discussion is common to all three action alternatives. Although all three alternatives result in a significant and unavoidable visual impact to the visual character of the area, the type and level of impact varies among the three alternatives. See alternative-specific impacts in the subsections below. Visual character is, in part, determined by the existing conditions and development, or lack thereof, for the project site. The proposed gondola project site includes developed base areas, existing ski runs, exposed ridgelines, sparsely vegetated slopes, and heavily utilized roads (i.e. Squaw Valley Road, Chalet Road and Alpine Meadows Road). Many factors used to evaluate degradations to visual character include, but are not limited to, activity of the viewer (e.g. hiker, skier, driver, resident), duration of the view, vegetative screening that may change over time, and perceived level of contrast with existing conditions created by the project; these variables were factored into the analysis to the greatest extent practicable.

To analyze the visual character and project impacts, the DEIS/EIR identified 16 viewpoint locations within the study area and for which visual simulations were created. These viewpoints are vantage points from highly frequented or prominent public areas, visually sensitive vistas, and areas with a high frequency of viewers. Several of the viewpoints were analyzed for both winter and summer conditions, and therefore there are 21 views for which visual simulations were created (refer to Appendix D of the DEIS/EIR for visual simulations).

All action alternatives would increase the developed nature of the project site and contrast with the existing visual character, and as such, this impact is determined to be significant. Even with the inclusion of RPMs SCE-1 through SCE-4, SCE-6, and SCE-7, which minimize the impacts by requiring implementation of design elements that aid in the project features blending with the natural environment (e.g. colors, materials, architectural features, landscaping and screening, etc.), the impact remains significant and unavoidable for all three alternatives. These adverse effects to visual character, however, are not identical across action alternatives. Alternative 2 would have the greatest impact, followed by Alternative 4 and finally Alternative 3.

##### ***Alternative 2***

Alternative 2 would result in adverse effects to visual character because this gondola alignment would traverse the ridgeline separating the National Forest System-GCW from the Caldwell property. The visual simulations show that gondola infrastructure would be particularly evident on this ridgeline from Alpine Meadows Road and the Alpine Meadows base area and would exhibit considerable contrast on this side of the alignment. The prominence of gondola infrastructure along this ridgeline would mean that Alternative 2 would have the most substantial negative impact on visual character out of all the action alternatives. Similar to Alternatives 3 and 4, the Alternative 2 proposed infrastructure near the Squaw Valley base area would contrast less with existing development of that area. For Alternative 2, the viewshed analysis indicates that gondola infrastructure would be potentially visible from approximately 17.99 square miles within the surrounding area. Alternative 2 would not be visible from Lake Tahoe.

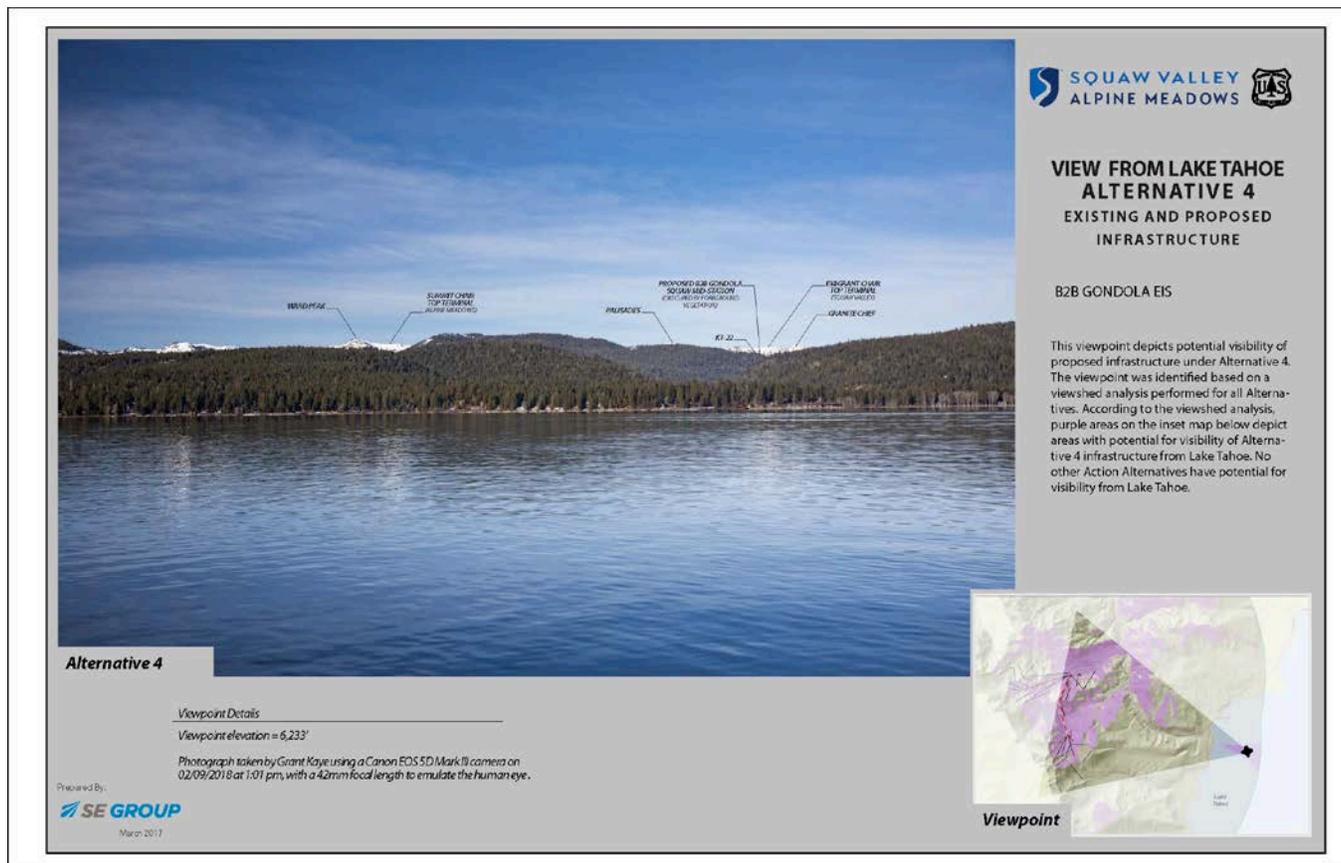
##### ***Alternative 3***

For Alternative 3, visual effects are less than those associated with Alternative 2 as the gondola alignment would drop into “Catch Valley” (i.e. a valley in the interior of the Caldwell property), and the natural topography would screen the gondola from many viewing locations. Impacts on visual character associated with Alternative 3 are comparable to those associated with Alternative 2 near the Squaw

Valley base area, as proposed infrastructure is comparable to existing infrastructure on the Squaw Valley side, which would not vary appreciably between action alternatives. For Alternative 3, the viewshed analysis indicates that gondola infrastructure would be potentially visible from approximately 16.04 square miles within the surrounding area. Alternative 3 would not be visible from Lake Tahoe.

**Alternative 4**

Visual effects associated with Alternative 4 are less than those associated with Alternative 2 but slightly greater than those associated with Alternative 3. Under Alternative 4 the gondola alignment would run closer to the floor of Catch Valley, meaning that although the natural topography would screen the gondola from many locations, it would not traverse Catch Valley via the lowest alignment possible like with Alternative 3 and thus be slightly more visible. Impacts on visual character associated with Alternative 4 are comparable to those of Alternatives 2 and 3 near the Squaw Valley base area, as proposed infrastructure is comparable to existing infrastructure on the Squaw Valley side, which would not vary appreciably between action alternatives. For Alternative 4, the viewshed analysis indicates that gondola infrastructure would be potentially visible from approximately 19.05 square miles within the surrounding area, and has potential for visibility from a small section of Lake Tahoe, just to the east of Tahoe City. It is important to note, however, that the viewshed analysis does not take into account existing vegetative screening which could greatly reduce the actual visibility of Alternative 4 facilities from Lake Tahoe. Figure 4 below, although not a visual simulation, shows that vegetative screening would fully obscure gondola infrastructure for viewers within this small section of Lake Tahoe.



**Figure 4: View of Alternative 4 from Lake Tahoe**

**Chapter 4.7 – Transportation and Circulation**

It is important to note that from a transportation perspective, transportation impacts resultant of Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 are identical. Thus the impact discussion and significance determination below applies equally to all three alternatives.

A skier visitation analysis (refer to Appendix C in the DEIS/EIR) conducted for the gondola project estimated a 1.4 percent increase in annual skier visits over the previous 10 year average resultant of the proposed project. After the first year, it is estimated that each subsequent year's projected increase would be slightly lower than the year prior (i.e. a diminishment of returns). The ski industry as a whole has found that construction of a new lift, or other facility, does not have a long-lasting impression on the market and rapidly becomes normalized to the overall facility. Thus there is a zero percent increase over the baseline by the fifth year after installation of the gondola. The estimated incremental increase for the first year would be 12,400 skier visits over the current baseline. By year five, the cumulative incremental visits associated with the gondola would roughly total 36,856 skier visits. Although discussed further in Chapter 4.7 of the DEIS/EIR, on what might be considered a "busier" Saturday, this could result in an additional 422 daily vehicle trips to/from the two ski resorts (i.e. 211 trips in and 211 trips out). On what might be considered a "busier" Sunday, this could result in an additional 432 daily vehicle trips to/from the two ski resorts (i.e. 216 trips in and 216 trips out).

***Impact 4.7-4 Impacts on Vehicular Queuing at Caltrans Intersections***

Vehicle trips generated by the project would increase the maximum queue length in the northbound left-turn lane at the SR 89/Alpine Meadows Road intersection from 350 to 375 feet during the Saturday AM peak hour, thereby further exceeding the 300 feet of available storage. This 25-foot increase in queue length equates to one additional vehicle as the traffic model used provides 25 feet of queue length for each vehicle. Vehicle trips generated by the project would not, however, increase maximum queues on SR 89 turn lanes at the Squaw Valley Road intersection. Mitigation measure 4.7-4 requires the applicant to coordinate with Caltrans to implement signal timing modifications that provide a greater amount of green time for this movement during peak winter AM periods. Although Caltrans staff has indicated that they support the idea of modifying signal timing in response to changes in travel demand, Placer County cannot ensure that this improvement would be implemented because it would occur under Caltrans's and not the County's jurisdiction. Therefore, this impact would be significant and unavoidable despite the availability of a mitigation measure that, if implemented, would restore operations to an acceptable level.

***Impact 4.7-11 Cumulative Impacts - Impacts on Caltrans Intersections***

Traffic conditions are sometimes evaluated by using level of service (LOS). See DEIS/EIR chapter 4.7 for further discussion.

The proposed project would worsen LOS F conditions at the I-80 EB Ramps/SR 89 roundabout during the Sunday PM peak hour by increasing average delays by 9 seconds. The project would also exacerbate LOS F conditions at the SR 89/Squaw Valley Road intersection during the Sunday PM peak hour by increasing the average delay by 23 seconds. This is caused by the addition of 166 vehicles being added to the critical eastbound left-turn movement. For both of these intersections, delays attributable to the project would exceed applicable thresholds for intersections that already operate at unacceptable levels under the cumulative no project condition. Although the project would increase delays marginally at other intersections on this corridor, none of those increases would exceed applicable thresholds. This results in a significant impact. Mitigation measure 4.7-11 requires the applicant to implement strategies to reduce vehicle trips generated during the Sunday PM peak hour and on peak ski days. Specifically, the mitigation measure requires evidence of compliance with the Placer County Trip Reduction Ordinance, including a Transportation Demand Management strategy; which may include, but is not limited to, operating a complementary shuttle serving off-site park-and-ride lots, implement programs to better disperse skier departures in peak afternoons through entertainment options and incentives and joining/renewing membership in the Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management Association. Although implementation of this mitigation measure may lessen the impacts, it would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level. As such this impact remains significant and unavoidable.

#### ***Impact 4.7-12 Cumulative Impacts - Impacts on Vehicular Queuing at Caltrans Intersections***

Under cumulative no project conditions, northbound traffic on SR 89 during the Saturday AM peak hour would extend from the SR 89/Squaw Valley Road intersection back through the SR 89/Alpine Meadows Road intersection. The project, by virtue of attracting new skiers and shifting some would-be skiers from Squaw Valley to Alpine Meadows, would result in a 25-foot increase in the maximum queue on northbound SR 89 approaching Alpine Meadows Road. As identified above under Impact 4.7-4, under existing conditions, queuing during the Saturday AM peak hour exceeds available storage. This would be further exacerbated under the cumulative plus project condition. The project would also exacerbate queuing in the southbound approach to the SR 89/Squaw Valley Road intersection. Sunday PM peak hour queue spillbacks would occur in the eastbound directions of Alpine Meadows Road and Squaw Valley Road but would not occur on the state highway. This results in a significant impact. The same mitigation measure required for impact 4.7-11 above is required for this impact. Again, although the implementation of the mitigation measure may lessen the impacts, it would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level. As such this impact remains significant and unavoidable.

#### ***Impact 4.7-13 Cumulative Impacts - Impacts on Caltrans Highways***

Vehicle trips generated by the project would exacerbate cumulatively unacceptable operations on the segment of SR 89 between Squaw Valley Road and West River Street intersection because this segment would experience an increase in the volume to capacity ratio that would exceed applicable thresholds. Specifically the analysis shows that all facilities would operate at LOS D or worse. The project would not worsen the LOS at any specific facilities. However, it would add traffic during the Sunday PM peak hour to the segment of SR 89 between Squaw Valley Road and West River Street, which would operate at LOS F without the project. This added traffic would result in an increase in the V/C ratio of greater than 0.05. This results in a significant impact. The same mitigation measure required for impact 4.7-11 above is required for this impact. Again, although the implementation of the mitigation measure may lessen the impacts, it would not reduce the impact to a less than significant level. As such this impact remains significant and unavoidable.

### Chapter 4.9 – Noise

#### ***Impact 4.9-1 Construction Noise Impacts (All Action Alternatives)***

A temporary increase in ambient noise levels is anticipated from general construction activities associated with the gondola installation (e.g. heavy equipment, site grading/clearing, tree removal, truck traffic, etc.). In addition, blasting may be necessary at remote locations for ski lift tower and Gazex avalanche exploder installation, and mid-station construction. Helicopters, which represent the loudest average noise level related to construction activities, would also be used to transport material and personnel to construction sites. Helicopter use would be relatively infrequent and temporary, occurring up to 20 days out of the entire construction period and only during daytime hours, minimizing the potential to disturb people when they are sleeping.

Sensitive receptors that may be impacted by construction noise impacts include residences that are located near the Squaw Valley base terminal, particularly for Alternatives 2 and 3 and near the Alpine Meadows mid-station for Alternative 3. Other sensitive receptors such as hikers on the Fives Lakes trail and who are in/near the GCW would also be impacted while the gondola is under construction. Alternative 2, which is closest to the GCW, presents the greatest construction noise impacts to hikers, while Alternatives 3 and 4, which are farther east, would have slightly lessened impacts.

Implementation of RPMs NOI-1 through NOI-6, and MUL-7, would mitigate this effect as they define the timing and duration of construction and the proper use of muffling devices on equipment, would ensure construction noise is minimized to the extent possible by limiting helicopter flight paths to avoid residential areas and the Granite Chief Wilderness (GCW), require blasting to be conducted by qualified contractors, and provide a means to reduce potentially disturbing noise during ongoing construction activities by establishing a disturbance coordinator. RPM MUL-7 also limits the duration of construction to a single construction season, thus limiting the duration for which these noise impacts may occur. Although the RPMs would reduce the more typical construction and operational noise and vibration impacts to less

than significant, it is the helicopter noise that could occur for up to 20-days in proximity to existing sensitive land uses and receptors, and could result in substantial temporary increases in disturbance. Thus the impacts related to helicopter noise would remain significant and unavoidable for all three action alternatives. Refer to *Chapter 4* of the DEIS/EIR for full discussion.

### **Environmentally Superior Alternative**

To determine the environmentally superior alternative, all alternatives were evaluated with respect to their ability to avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effects of the proposed project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) indicates that an environmentally superior alternative shall be identified in an EIR and that if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Action Alternative, then the EIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative from among the other alternatives.

Based on the analysis contained in the DEIS/EIR, and from the standpoint of minimizing environmental effects, the environmentally superior alternative is the No Action – Alternative 1. Under Alternative 1, no construction would take place and the project site would remain consistent with existing conditions. No change to the existing environment would occur under Alternative 1. However, Alternative 1 would not meet any of the basic project objectives related to providing a connection between the Alpine Meadows and Squaw Valley base areas or providing a more efficient and safer avalanche control system.

It is important to note that for several environmental issue areas, the effects are the same across all three action alternatives. This is the case for Land Use, Transportation and Circulation, Utilities, Air Quality, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change. It was determined that Alternative 2 has the greatest collective impact. The key significant environmental effects of Alternative 2 relate to the alternative's close proximity to the GCW which results in more severe effects to noise and visual resources than the other alternatives. Alternative 2 is also the closest alignment to known occupied habitat for the Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog (SNYLF).

When comparing Alternatives 3 and 4, although Alternative 3 has less of an effect than Alternative 4 in some areas, such as disturbance of aquatic habitats, Alternative 4 results in less of an effect in multiple areas such as recreation, noise, total ground disturbance, tree removal, and SNYLF upland habitat. Therefore, overall, Alternative 4 is determined to have less of an adverse environmental effect compared to Alternative 3, and is considered to be the environmentally superior alternative.

### **TIME FRAMES**

The 45-day public comment period for the Squaw Valley / Alpine Meadows Base-To-Base Gondola DEIS/EIR began on April 27, 2018 and ends at 5:00 p.m. on June 11, 2018.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Environmental Review Committee recommends that the Planning Commission receive public comments on the DEIS/EIR and direct staff to respond to all written and oral comments in the Final EIS/EIR.

Respectfully submitted,



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Heather Beckman  
Environmental Review Committee

**ATTACHMENTS**

**UNDER SEPARATE COVER** – Squaw Valley / Alpine Meadows Base-To-Base Gondola Draft Environmental Impact Report and Environmental Impact Statement

- cc: EIR file  
Eli Ilano, Forest Supervisor Tahoe National Forest  
Joanne Roubique, Tahoe National Forest, Truckee Ranger District  
Joe Flannery, Lands, Special Uses, and Winter Sports  
Karie Wiltshire, NEPA Planner, Truckee and Sierraville Ranger District  
Gary Jakobs, Ascent Environmental  
Sean Bechta, Ascent Environmental  
Kent Sharp, SE Group  
Will Hollo, SE Group  
Bryan Elliott, Squaw Valley / Alpine Meadows Project Manager for Gondola Project  
Adrienne Graham, Squaw Valley / Alpine Meadows Consulting Environmental Planner  
Steve Pedretti, Agency Director  
Rick Eiri, Assistant Agency Director  
EJ Ivaldi, Deputy Planning Director  
Dan Dottai, Deputy Director of Engineering & Surveying  
Karin Schwab, County Counsel  
Leigh Chavez, Environmental Coordinator  
Sarah Gillmore, Engineering and Surveying  
Richard Moorehead, Public Works  
Stephanie Holloway, Public Works  
Joseph Scarbrough, Environmental Health Division  
Angel Green, Air Quality, Community Development Resource Agency  
Christina Hanson, Facilities Services  
Squaw Valley Municipal Advisory Council  
North Tahoe Regional Advisory Council  
NOP/NOI commenters