

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/RESOURCE AGENCY**  
**Environmental Coordination Services**  
County of Placer

**DATE:** July 31, 2026

**TO:** California State Clearinghouse  
Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Parties and Organizations

**SUBJECT:** **Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Gateway Park Project**

**REVIEW PERIOD:** **July 31, 2026 to August 31, 2026**

As lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Gateway Park Project (proposed project), Placer County has prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) in accordance with Section 15082 of the Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (CEQA Guidelines). According to that provision, the purpose of the NOP is to provide responsible agencies and trustee agencies the opportunity to provide the lead agency with specific details about the scope and content of the environmental information related to the responsible and trustee agencies' areas of statutory responsibility that the agencies would like the lead agency to include in the Draft EIR.

The County will need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Responsible agencies will need to use the EIR prepared by the County when considering their permits or other approvals for the proposed project. Your agencies' timely comments on this NOP should ensure that the Draft EIR will include sufficient environmental information to allow your agencies to complete their statutory responsibilities with respect to the proposed project.

This NOP is also being provided to other interested parties who are also invited to provide their recommendations regarding the scope and content of the Draft EIR.

**Project Location:** The proposed recreational area, which totals approximately 112 acres, is located near Blue Canyon, south of Interstate 80 (I-80) in unincorporated Placer County. The 112-acre project site consists of portions of multiple parcels (Assessor's Parcel Numbers [APNs] 062-400-022, 062-510-020, and 062-230-012) located around Lake Putt, an approximately 34-acre artificial lake that is contained by earthen dams to the east and west.

**Project Setting:** The project site is forested land surrounding Lake Putt and has been heavily disturbed by historic on-site timber production and gravel crushing operations. The Placer County General Plan designates the project site as Rural Residential 1 – 10 Acre Minimum and Water Influence (WI). The project APNs are zoned Farm, Combining Minimum Building Site of 5 Acres (F-B-X 5 AC); F-B-X 5 AC with an Aircraft Overflight Combining District (F-B-X-AO 5 AC), Residential Forest with 40 acre minimum parcel size (RF-B-X 40 AC), and Residential Forest with 40 acre minimum parcel size with Aircraft Overflight (RF-B-X-AO 40 AC). The zoning designations of the proposed 112-acre recreational area that comprises the project site are limited to F-B-X-AO 5 AC and F-B-X 5 AC.

The project site was logged for timber in 2002 and 2004 under the previous owner of the property. Following the historic logging operations, the project site was poorly managed, resulting in a substantial amount of forest fuel density that has adversely impacted forest health. In 2012, Placer County granted a conditional use permit for the temporary, seasonal operation of a portable aggregate crushing plant within the project site. The plant resulted in substantial alteration of the portion of the property south of Lake Putt.

Previous forest health and fire risk management activities have taken place on the project site and surrounding lands under the same private ownership, following necessary state agency approvals. For example, on February 16, 2024, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) filed a Notice of Exemption (NOE) for the approved Tahoe Forest Gateway - Forest Health Project CEQA Statutory Exemption under Public Resources Code (PRC) Section

21080.56(a). The Tahoe Forest Gateway - Forest Health Project included forest health and fire risk management on 563 acres of privately-owned land, including the project site. In addition, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy filed an NOE for an additional statutory exemption under PRC Section 21080.56(a) on March 6, 2025, for the approved Tahoe Forest Gateway - Forest Health, Phase Two Project. The Tahoe Forest Gateway - Forest Health, Phase Two Project included implementation of forest-health treatments on 189 acres of privately-owned forested land, including the project site. Grant funding was issued by WCB and Sierra Nevada Conservancy to perform the above-described activities. Under the statutory exemptions described above, forest restoration activities have occurred throughout the project site with the goal of: (1) removing dead, diseased, and dying trees, except for snags that may provide meaningful habitat; (2) increasing spacing between retained conifers and oaks to trigger conifer release; (3) reducing the fuel load on the ground through mastication and other forms of biomass removal; (4) reducing the target basal area on the project site between 80-120 square feet (sf); (5) re-establishing the understory with native grasses and forbs as an alternative to chaparral species (bitter cherry, coffeeberry, Greenleaf manzanita); (6) diversifying the species of conifers and deciduous trees that are present on-site; and (7) supporting a diversity of native species across the project through the use of irrigation.

Restoration goals one through four, as described above, were completed across the project site prior to the applicant's submittal of the current Minor Use Permit application. Except for the project site, restoration tasks associated with goals five through seven are ongoing throughout the remainder of the 563 acres of forested land. It is important to note that the abovementioned efforts are separate from the proposed project, and the associated activities are not being permitted by any action as part of the entitlement process for the proposed project. Activities associated with the abovementioned efforts would not occur during the entitlement process for the proposed project.

**Project Description:** The proposed project would include the development of a “dude ranch”/“guest ranch,” generally consisting of 50 cabin units, a 13,934-sf nature museum, 5,000-sf storage barn, community park, a cafeteria open to overnight and day-use guests, and associated recreational amenities, as well as a seasonal snow park. The 50 cabin units would include 23 traditional cabins and 27 treehouses structurally supported by existing on-site trees. The cabin units would range in size from approximately 338 sf to 790 sf and would have development footprints smaller than 625 sf. The proposed nature museum would be open to the public and would provide recreational equipment rentals for non-motorized lake activities. In addition, a Placer County Sheriff's field office is contemplated within the nature museum building to serve an underserved area of the County. The community park would include a 60-seat amphitheater, playground, and basketball court. Several walking and hiking trails would also be constructed as a part of the proposed project, which would connect to existing trails within the Tahoe National Forest. The existing on-site lake, Lake Putt, would be used for recreational activities, including fishing, swimming, paddleboarding, and non-motorized boating. The recreational activities on Lake Putt would be enabled by a newly constructed earthen pier.

Primary site access would be provided by a new gated connection to Nyack Place (a County-maintained road) to the northeast of the project site. The proposed project would include an internal circulation network consisting of 12-foot-wide, one-way and 20-foot-wide, two-way paved roadways that would loop throughout the project site. Improvements would be made to Nyack Place from the northeast project entrance to Nyack Road, which would consist of widening the existing road to be 20 feet wide, constructing a public turnaround prior to the private gated entrance, and striping within the existing semi-truck parking lot to delineate the roadway from the paved parking area. Emergency vehicle access (EVA) to the project site would be provided from Putt Road, located northwest of the project site, by way of a new 20-foot-wide, two-lane gated and paved EVA road that would connect to the internal roadway system. Emergency vehicles could also access the project site through the northeastern access gate. The proposed project would include 165 parking spaces, consisting of 50 spaces for overnight guests, 107 spaces for day use, including two bus spaces, eight spaces dedicated for maintenance vehicles, six Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) spaces, and nine electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, as well as 50 bicycle parking spaces.

The proposed project would require County approval of a Minor Use Permit, as discussed in further detail below. Other approvals necessary to implement the proposed project could include a Section 404 permit from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), a Section 1602 permit from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), a Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the Regional Water Quality

Control Board (RWQCB), a Timber Harvest Plan and Timberland Conversion Permit from the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF), and a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit.

Greenbook Builders, LLC, is the applicant for the project.

**Contact Information:** For more information regarding the proposed project, please refer to the following detailed project description or contact David Oulrey-Urroz, Senior Planner, at (530) 745-3023 or [doulreyurroz@placer.ca.gov](mailto:doulreyurroz@placer.ca.gov). A copy of the NOP is available for review on the Placer County website at:

<https://www.placer.ca.gov/10794/Environmental-Impact-Reports>

The NOP is also available during normal business hours, at the same link, via computer kiosks at the Placer County Libraries, the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency (3091 County Center Drive, Auburn) and Tahoe (775 North Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City), and the County Clerk's Office (2954 Richardson Drive, Auburn).

**NOP Comment Period:** Written comments should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 PM on August 31, 2026 to Meghan Schwartz, Environmental Coordination Services, Placer County Community Development Resource Agency, 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603, (530) 745-3132, or [cdraecs@placer.ca.gov](mailto:cdraecs@placer.ca.gov).

**NOP Scoping Meeting:** In addition to the opportunity to submit written comments, a NOP scoping meeting will be held in person to inform interested parties about the proposed project, and to provide agencies and the public with an opportunity to provide comments on the scope and content of the EIR. Further information on the date and time of the scoping meeting is provided below.

**EIR Scoping Meeting on Gateway Park Project**

Monday | August 24, 2026 | 3:00 PM

In-Person:

Planning Commission Hearing Room  
3091 County Center Drive, Auburn, CA

Virtual:

<https://placer-ca-gov.zoom.us/j/97181070313>

Join via audio: +1 888 788 0099 US Toll Free or 877 853 5247 US Toll Free  
Webinar ID: 971 8107 0313

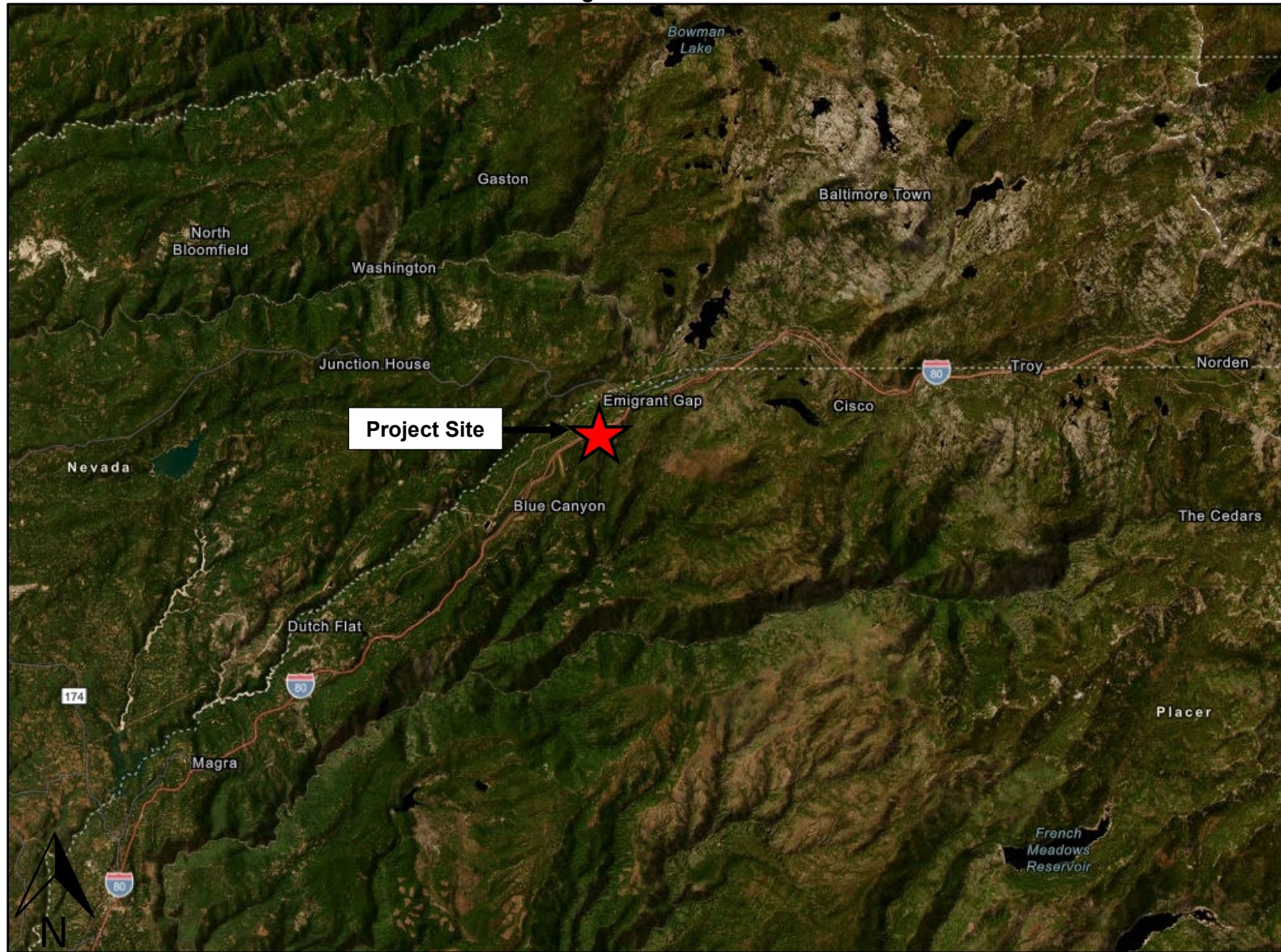
## **1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **1.1 Location and Setting**

The project site is located near Blue Canyon, south of I-80 in unincorporated Placer County (see Figure 1). The approximately 112-acre proposed recreational area that comprises the project site, identified by portions of APNs 062-400-022, 062-510-020, and 062-230-012, is currently undeveloped and consists primarily of a forested landscape, including, but not limited to, Sierra Mixed Conifer Forest, Montane Hardwood-Conifer Forest, Montane Hardwood Forest, and Montane Chaparral, as well as an on-site pond and ephemeral drainage, and an approximately 30-acre artificial lake (Lake Putt). The project site has been heavily disturbed by previous on-site logging and gravel crushing operations.

In addition, as discussed above, forest restoration efforts, including fuel load reduction, clearing of vegetation, species diversification, and targeted irrigation, have taken place throughout the project site and have included the use of mechanized equipment, including skid steers, logging skidders, log processors, and log loaders. As a result, a considerable number of legacy skid roads and trails are present throughout the project site and adjacent properties.

**Figure 1**  
**Regional Location**



The Placer County General Plan designates the site as WI and Rural Residential 1-10 Acre Minimum, and the APNs are zoned F-B-X 5 AC, RF-B-X 40 AC, F-B-X-AO 5 AC, and RF-B-X-AO 40 AC. The zoning designations of the proposed 112-acre recreational area that comprises the project site are limited to F-B-X-AO 5 AC and F-B-X 5 AC.

## 1.2 Surrounding Land Uses

Surrounding existing land uses for the project site include forested land to the north, across I-80; the Nyack Shell Station to the northeast, at the Nyack Road exit from I-80; Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks to the south and east, across forested land; and scattered single-family rural residences and forested land to the west (near the existing pond south of Putt Road and east of Judah Road). The “North Line” and associated easement of the Santa Fe Pacific Pipelines system, which transports gasoline and diesel from the Bay Area, constitutes the southern border of the project site. Roadways in the immediate project vicinity include Nyack Place to the northeast and Putt Road to the northwest (see Figure 2). An existing access road runs from Nyack Place through the project site. Additionally, the northern boundary of the project site is adjacent to I-80. Table 1 describes the land use and zoning designations of the parcels surrounding the project site.

| <b>Parcel Location</b>    | <b>Land Use</b>                                                                                             | <b>Zoning</b>                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| North of the Project Site | Agriculture/Timberland – 10 Acre Minimum                                                                    | I-80, I-80 with Aircraft Overflight (I-80-AO), Forestry with 10 acre minimum parcel size with Aircraft Overflight (FOR-AO 10 AC) |
| South of the Project Site | Rural Residential 1-10 Acre Minimum, Agriculture/Timberland 40 Acre Minimum                                 | F-B-X-AO 5 AC, RF-B-X-AO 40 AC                                                                                                   |
| East of the Project Site  | Agriculture/Timberland – 10 Acre Minimum, Rural Residential 1-10 Acre Minimum                               | Residential Forest (RF), Residential Forest with Aircraft Overflight (RF-AO), F-B-X 5 AC, RF-B-X-AO 40 AC                        |
| West of the Project Site  | Rural Residential 1-10 Acre Minimum, Low Density Residential 1000 sf to 1 Acre Minimum (1-5 Dwelling Units) | F-B-X-AO 5 AC, Forestry with Aircraft Overflight (FOR-AO), Timberland Production with Aircraft Overflight (TPZ-AO)               |

## 1.3 Project Components

The proposed project would include the development of a dude ranch/guest ranch generally consisting of 50 lodging units, a 13,934-sf nature museum, 5,000-sf storage barn, community park, and associated recreational amenities, as well as a seasonal snow park (see Figure 3). The project components are described in further detail below.

### Lodging Units

The proposed lodging units would include 23 traditional cabins and 27 tree houses structurally supported by existing on-site trees. All 50 lodging units would support short-term overnight stays and would provide immersive educational experiences. The lodging units would range in size from approximately 338 sf to 790 sf, would not exceed 30 feet in height, and would have development footprints smaller than 625 sf. The proposed lodging units would not be operated as an organized camp.

#### *Traditional Cabins*

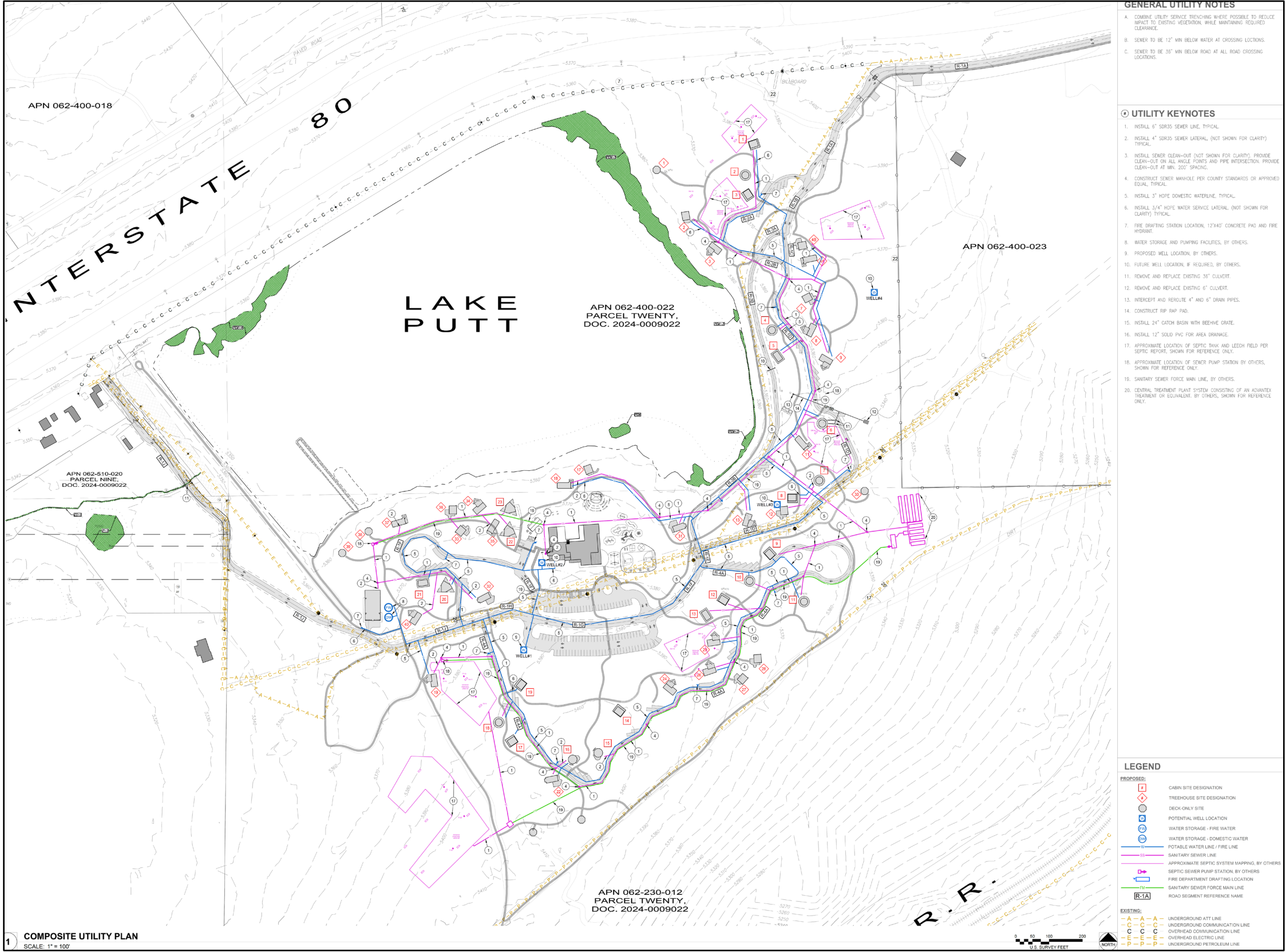
The traditional cabin lodging units would range in size from approximately 338 sf to 623 sf and would include five cabin models. The traditional cabin units would include two four-person maximum models (623 sf), three three-person maximum models (565 sf), three ADA accessible, four-person maximum models (621 sf), eight two-person maximum models (338 sf habitable space; 285 sf covered deck), and seven ADA accessible, three-person models (504 sf).

Figure 2  
Project Location



*Note: Project site boundaries are approximate.*

Figure 3  
Site Plan



The traditional cabin models would all include one bedroom; a bathroom with a toilet, sink, and shower; and kitchen with a sink.

### *Tree Houses and Wildlife View Decks*

The tree house lodging units would range in size from 450 sf to 790 sf and would include four tree house models, Models A through D. The tree house units would include 10 Model A units (570 sf), three Model B units (790 sf), nine Model C units (450 sf), and five Model D units (550 sf). The tree house Models A through D would all include one bedroom; a bathroom with a toilet, sink, and shower; and kitchenette with a sink.

The proposed project would also include five tree-supported wildlife viewing decks, including one ADA accessible viewing deck. The proposed wildlife viewing decks would offer elevated views of the landscape to public visitors of the proposed project.

The proposed tree houses and wildlife viewing decks would use a combination of trees and traditional structural members as support columns and would be used all year. Each tree house and wildlife viewing deck would be supported by a combination of mature conifers with a diameter of at least 18-inches at breast height. The on-site trees that would support the proposed tree houses and wildlife viewing decks have undergone visual and physical evaluations for signs of degradation, as well as structural analysis.

### **Nature Museum and Storage Barn**

The proposed 13,934-sf nature museum would consist of two floors and would be open to the public year-round. The nature museum would serve as a private trailhead and would include educational displays, exhibits, a check-in center for both overnight lodging and day-use guests, a cafeteria for use by park visitors only, lobby, administrative office space, recreational equipment rentals for non-motorized lake activities, and a potential Placer County Sheriff field office. The first floor of the proposed nature museum would include nature education exhibits, the potential Placer County Sheriff field office, dining and community meeting spaces, and a food service area (i.e., cafeteria). The food service area would be for overnight and day-use guests and would include a 1,400-sf kitchen, 2,360-sf of indoor seating for up to 80 people, and 2,087 sf of patio seating for up to 70 people. The cafeteria would be open from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Saturday, and would be closed on Sundays. The second floor of the proposed nature museum would be used almost exclusively for administrative and office uses, including, but not limited to, laundry facilities, storage areas, employee lockers, and break rooms. The proposed nature museum would include 12 public restrooms and two employee-only restrooms.

The nature museum would be staffed daily from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. Hospitality check-in services for overnight guests would be available in the nature museum daily from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM. On Sundays, the proposed nature museum would operate on a reduced-service basis, with the public education and food service functions closed and the entrance gate unstaffed. Day-use visitation would not be offered on Sundays; site access would be limited to overnight guests holding reservations, whose pre-issued credentials would operate the main entrance gate electronically without an on-site attendant. Approximately 50 employees, including nature museum, cafeteria, administrative, and janitorial staff and volunteers would be present during project operations. The proposed nature museum would also function as a place of respite for on-site patrons and off-site groups, as necessary, during emergency situations, including, but not limited to, wildfires and inclement weather.

The proposed 5,000-sf storage barn would include storage space for maintenance equipment, as well as a small office and restroom. The storage barn would be used to store maintenance equipment, including but not limited to, tractors, skid steers, tools, and utility vehicles (UTVs) for land management, as well as fixtures, signage, and recreational equipment.

### **Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails**

The proposed project would include a community park that would include active recreational space, a basketball court, playgrounds, and a 60-seat amphitheater. Amphitheater operations would not include amplified sound. Lake Putt would be used for recreational fishing, swimming, paddleboarding, and non-

motorized boating activities. The proposed project would include construction of a new earthen pier that extends into Lake Putt. Only watercraft rented from the proposed nature museum would be permitted for use within Lake Putt. A lifeguard would be present during all permitted water play activities. The proposed project would also include various walking and hiking trails that would extend throughout the project site and connect to existing trails within the Tahoe National Forest in the project vicinity. The proposed project would not include any improvements to existing hiking trails outside of the project site, and the proposed on-site trails would only serve non-motorized activities. Furthermore, between three and 10 all-terrain powered wheelchairs would be provided for disability access to the proposed trails.

During winter months with adequate snowfall, the proposed project would also operate as a day-use snow park. The proposed snow park would be used for predominately non-motorized snow play activities, including sledding and backcountry skiing. The snow park would operate daily, on a “first-come, first-served” model from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Monday through Saturday and on a reservation-only system closed to the public on Sundays. The two main areas to be used for day-use snow-play include the area north of the nature museum and the area south of the central parking area. Snow play would not be allowed west of Lake Putt.

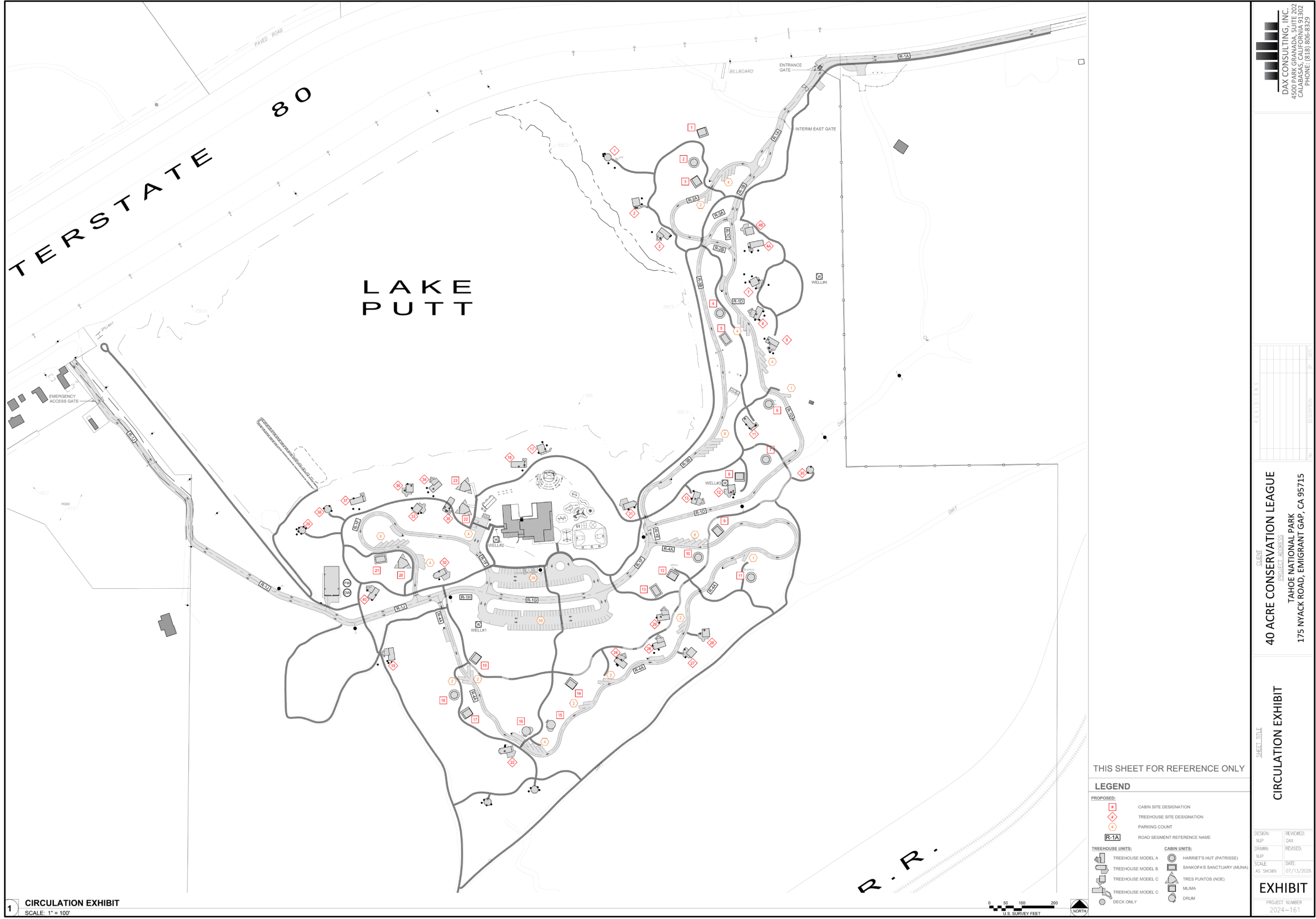
### **Access, Circulation, and Parking**

Primary site access would be provided by a new roadway connection to Nyack Place at the northeast corner of the project site (see Figure 4). The proposed project would include the off-site widening and striping of an approximately 680-foot segment of Nyack Place east of the proposed main entrance in the northeastern corner of the project site. The new entrance to the project site from Nyack Place would include a guard gate to control ingress and egress from the site. The guard gate would be staffed 24 hours per day Monday through Saturday and would operate electronically on Sundays. Guests entering the site would be required to pay an entrance fee at the Nyack Place guard gate. Sunday would be a reduced-service day where site access would be limited to guests holding a confirmed overnight reservation. Because day-use entry would not occur on Sundays, the functions of a staffed gate (i.e., day-use fee collection, availability screening, and walk-up management) would not be required. During Sundays and any other unstaffed period, the gate would operate as an automated, reservation-linked, access-controlled entrance. Access control would be primarily provided by a numeric PIN or pass associated with the reservations and secondarily controlled by an optional license plate recognition function. Consistent with the California Minimum Fire Safe Regulations and Placer County Code 15.04.580, the main gate would provide emergency-vehicle overrides through an override switch and a radio-frequency device or equivalent.

The off-site Nyack Place roadway widening would also include a public turnaround outside of the entrance gate, and a private turnaround area would be constructed on the project side of the entrance gate to allow for vehicles to turn around in peak (winter) operations without impeding other vehicular traffic. The new roadway connection would extend into the project site and would consist of a 20-foot-wide, two-way paved road, with two 10-foot-wide travel lanes. The primary access road would split into two 12-foot-wide, one-way paved roads just south of the east gate. The proposed one- and two-way roads would connect throughout the project site to form a looped internal roadway network, providing access to the proposed lodging units and nature museum.

Secondary gated EVA to the project site would be provided in the western portion of the project site, west of the proposed one-way roads. The gate would be restricted as an EVA-only roadway for the project site and would also serve as regular private access for the adjacent off-site property west of the project site (APN 062-510-007) by providing a vehicular connection from that parcel's northeast property line to Putt Road. The EVA would be a new 20-foot-wide, two-lane paved road that would extend southeast into the project site from Putt Road. The proposed EVA would connect to the proposed on-site roadway network and the existing private driveway serving the off-site property at APN 062-510-007. Similar to the main gate, consistent with the California Minimum Fire Safe Regulations and Placer County Code 15.04.580, the EVA gate would provide emergency-vehicle overrides through an override switch and a radio-frequency device or equivalent.

Figure 4  
Circulation Exhibit



The proposed project would include 165 parking spaces, consisting of 50 spaces for overnight guests, 107 spaces for day use, and eight spaces dedicated for maintenance vehicles. The proposed parking spaces would include two bus spaces, six ADA compliant spaces, and nine electric vehicle (EV) charging stations. In addition, the proposed project would include nine short-term bicycle parking spaces, as well as 50 bicycle parking spaces associated with the proposed lodging units and nature museum.

In support of the proposed snow park operations, 57 of the project's total 165 vehicle parking spaces and two bus parking spaces would be dedicated for snow park users. Buses would require a reservation to use one of the two designated bus spaces. Roadside or shoulder parking would not be permitted on Nyack Place or the I-80 ramps. The site would be declared "Lot Full" when 95 percent of the 57 snow-park spaces (and any bus reservations) are occupied. When the lot is near capacity, upstream signage would be deployed on Nyack Place (requiring an encroachment permit from the County) and vehicles arriving when the lot is full would be directed to perform a safe turnaround at the vehicle turnaround just inside the entrance. Queues would not be allowed to form on Nyack Place or at the I-80 off-ramp; attendants would suspend entry before any queue reaches the public right-of-way.

### **Utilities and Public Services**

Potable water and firewater flows for the proposed project would be provided by a new public water system, as permitted by the Placer County Environmental Health Department (PCEHD) with concurrence from the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), that would connect to four new wells within the project site (see Figure 3). Water from the proposed wells would be stored in dedicated domestic water and fire water storage tanks within the western portion of the project site. The proposed project would include construction of three-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) waterlines and water service laterals throughout the site that would connect to the existing and proposed wells, as well as proposed domestic water and fire water storage tanks (see Figure 3).

The proposed project would include construction of a new septic system under the regulation of the Central Valley RWQCB. The preliminary design consists of two leachfield areas with a total of six subfields. Wastewater flows from the proposed project would be conveyed to the proposed septic systems through new six-inch sanitary sewer lines and four-inch sanitary sewer force mains throughout the site (see Figure 3). The sewer lines would direct flows to a common pretreatment system before being pumped to the proposed pressure-dosed leach trenches. Six additional areas would be preserved that could be used for the installation of additional leachfields in the future, if necessary.

Existing on-site stormwater flows are conveyed through surface flow, with a significant portion of the existing on-site stormwater runoff ultimately draining into Lake Putt. All existing drainage patterns would be maintained under proposed conditions, with a majority of stormwater flows being directed into Lake Putt. In addition, under proposed conditions, a majority of the project site would remain as pervious surfaces, with the proposed additional impervious surfaces anticipated to have a negligible effect on flowrates.

Stormwater flows from the proposed project would be conveyed through an on-site stormwater conveyance system, which would be sized for the 10-year storm. Flows would be routed through surface flow, pipe flow, and catch basins, as well as a 36-inch culvert within the western portion of the project site beneath the proposed EVA roadway to accommodate the 100-year flows from the existing Lake Putt spillway and weir system. The project would also implement temporary and operational Best Management Practices (BMPs). Although BMPs currently exist, the proposed project would remove and replace the BMPs in order to treat stormwater runoff and comply with the County's Stormwater Quality Ordinance.

The proposed project is within the service area of Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E) for electric and natural gas service. An existing PG&E overhead electrical distribution system (OEDS) currently traverses the project site (see Figure 3). The proposed project is anticipated to require the installation of a new Pole Riser on an existing electrical pole within the western portion of the project site, as well as a pad mounted J-box to provide three new transformers that would serve the proposed project. In addition, AT&T would provide telephone and internet services to the proposed nature museum. Furthermore, the proposed project would include the undergrounding of the existing overhead utility lines and proposed utility lines within the

project site. The utility lines would only be undergrounded within the project site, and the proposed project would not create or extend new dry utilities beyond the project site boundaries.

Solid Waste associated with the proposed project would be deposited into two new solid waste enclosures located southwest of the proposed nature museum and east of Lake Putt, along the proposed roadway. The proposed solid waste enclosures would include six solid waste bins that would provide 36 cubic yards of solid waste storage. Bear-proof receptacles would also be provided along trails and common areas throughout the project site to provide an additional six cubic yards of solid waste capacity. Solid waste would be collected by Tahoe Truckee Sierra Disposal, a private collection firm, and transported to the Lockwood Landfill, located in Sparks, Nevada.

Additionally, the proposed project would be served by the Placer County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol (CHP), and Placer County Fire Department. The nearest fire station to the project site is a joint station under the California Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the Placer County Fire Department, located at 33333 Alta Forestry Road, approximately 8.93 miles southwest of the project site.

### **Quiet Hours**

Quiet hours would be observed from 9:00 PM to 7:00 AM every day. During quiet hours, outdoor amplified sound, loud gatherings, vehicle idling, equipment operation, and non-emergency maintenance activities would be prohibited. Emergency response, snow removal necessary to maintain safety, and essential utility operations would occur on an as-needed basis.

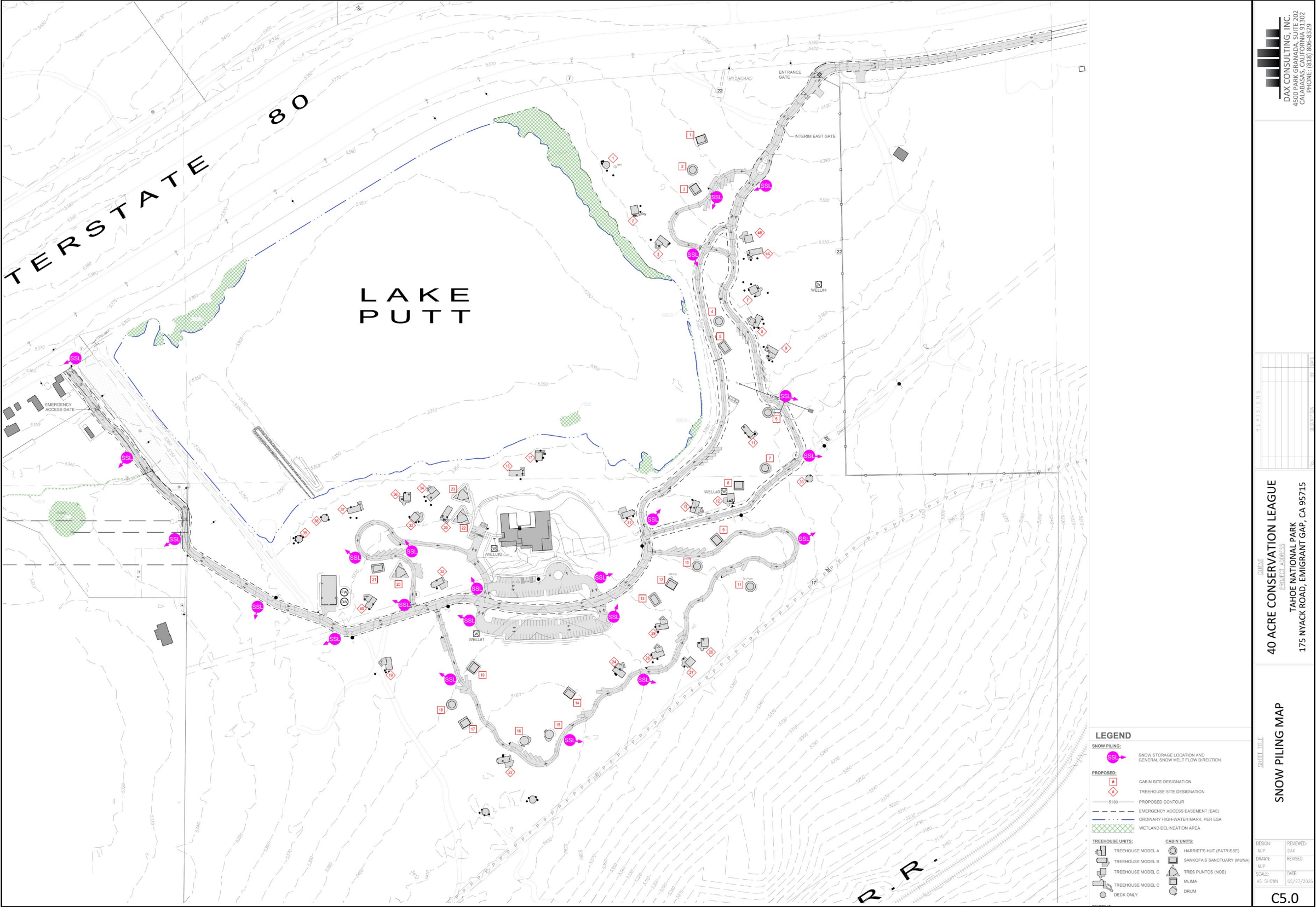
### **Snow Removal**

Snow removal activities during the winter months would be conducted consistent with common practices for mountain areas to maintain safe vehicular circulation, emergency access, and functional site operations throughout the season. Snow removal would be performed by staff using project-owned equipment, including vehicular snowplow trucks, vehicular snow blowers, and skid steer equipment equipped with both snowplow and snow blower attachments. Snow removal activities would occur prior to opening and as needed during extended storms to maintain access to internal circulation roads, parking areas, designated snow park use areas, emergency access routes, and utility access points. Snow removal would not be conducted as part of the project along Nyack Place, as the roadway is County maintained.

Snow generated from plowing and blowing operations would be stored on-site using a combination of fixed snow storage locations and performance-based placement criteria. Designated snow storage areas represent approximately 25 percent of the total cleared surface area, providing sufficient capacity for seasonal snow accumulation under typical winter conditions. The snow storage locations would be identified operationally at the start of the winter season in accessible areas that would allow for efficient snow stacking without interfering with circulation, parking, or emergency access. The snow storage locations would be clearly marked with high-visibility snow stakes at least six feet high, to define storage limits and protect underlying infrastructure. Based on the project's preliminary Snow Piling Map (see Figure 5), the proposed project tentatively includes 22 snow storage locations located throughout the site. Snow storage areas would be limited to locations that are flat or gently sloped, stable, and capable of receiving accumulated snow without creating erosion, drainage obstruction, or safety hazards. The chosen locations may be adjusted over the course of the winter season as necessary to respond to cumulative snowfall, changing site conditions, and operational needs, while remaining within approved storage areas and consistent with safety and drainage requirements. Snow storage is not proposed and would not occur along Nyack Place as a result of the project's private snow removal activities.

Figure 5 also shows the general snow melt flow directions anticipated for each snow storage location. Snow would be stored only in areas where meltwater can disperse naturally and infiltrate underlying soils, without concentrating runoff, causing localized ponding, or refreezing across active drive aisles or pedestrian travel areas. Snow storage would be located away from drainage features, natural conveyance areas, and watercourses to ensure that snowmelt does not enter surface flows or transport sediment off-site.

Figure 5  
Snow Piling Map



Snow placement would emphasize distributed storage and gradual melt, consistent with regional mountain snow management practices, and would avoid directing meltwater toward development or circulation routes.

#### **1.4 Requested Entitlements**

The proposed project would require County approval of the following:

- Minor Use Permit for development of a “dude ranch”/“guest ranch” within the F-B-X 5 AC. Minimum and F-B-X-AO 5 AC. Minimum zoning districts.

The project could also require the following approvals/permits from other responsible agencies:

- Section 404 Nationwide Permit (or Letter of Permission) (USACE);
- Section 401 Water Quality Certification (RWQCB – Central Valley Region);
- Public Water System Permit (RWQCB – Central Valley Region);
- Section 1602 Permit (CDFW);
- A Timber Harvest Plan and Timberland Conversion Permit (BOF); and
- NPDES Construction General Permit (RWQCB – Central Valley Region).

#### **2.0 PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SCOPE OF THE EIR**

Consistent with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the County anticipates that the EIR will contain the following chapters:

- |                                            |                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Aesthetics                               | • Land Use and Planning               |
| • Forestry Resources                       | • Noise                               |
| • Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions | • Public Services and Utilities       |
| • Biological Resources                     | • Transportation                      |
| • Cultural Resources                       | • Tribal Cultural Resources           |
| • Energy                                   | • Wildfire                            |
| • Geology and Soils                        | • Statutorily Required Sections       |
| • Hazards and Hazardous Materials          | • Effects Not Found to be Significant |
| • Hydrology and Water Quality              | • Alternatives Analysis               |

Each chapter of the EIR will include identification of the thresholds of significance, identification of project-level and cumulative impacts, and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring strategies, as required. The proposed EIR will describe the relevant portions of the Placer County General Plan and Placer County General Plan EIR, where applicable. In addition to these County documents, project-specific technical studies are being prepared by technical experts to support the EIR’s analyses. The following paragraphs summarize the anticipated analyses that will be included in the EIR.

***Aesthetics:*** The Aesthetics chapter of the EIR will summarize existing regional and project area aesthetics and visual setting. To the extent applicable, the chapter will describe project-specific aesthetics issues such as scenic vistas, trees, historic buildings, existing visual character or quality of the project area, as well as light and glare. The analysis included in the Aesthetics chapter of the EIR will be primarily based on a project-specific Visual Impact Assessment to determine whether the proposed project could result in the substantial degradation of the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

***Forestry Resources:*** The Forestry Resources chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and evaluate the extent to which buildout of the proposed project could result in the loss of forest land. The analysis included in the Forestry Resources chapter of the EIR will be primarily based on a project-specific Arborist Report which will determine the extent of on- and/or off-site tree removal associated with the proposed project. The chapter will identify thresholds of significance applicable to the proposed project and impacts

will be measured against the thresholds of significance. Appropriate mitigation measures for all identified impacts will be developed consistent with applicable regulations and policies of Placer County.

*Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions:* The air quality and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions analysis for the proposed project will be performed using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) software program and following Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD) CEQA Guidelines.

The air quality impact analysis will include a quantitative assessment of short-term (i.e., construction) and long-term (i.e., operational) increases of criteria air pollutant emissions of primary concern (i.e., ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub>). The project's cumulative contribution to regional air quality will be discussed, based in part on the modeling conducted at the project level. The analysis will also address any potential odor impacts that may occur, as well as toxic air contaminant (TAC) emissions.

The GHG emissions analysis will include a quantitative estimate of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions from the proposed project, including indirect emissions (e.g., electricity, natural gas) and construction emissions. The chapter will include an analysis of the project's consistency with the Placer County Sustainability Plan (PCSP).

The significance of air quality and GHG impacts will be determined in comparison to PCAPCD significance thresholds. PCAPCD-recommended mitigation measures and PCSP strategies will be incorporated, if needed, to reduce any significant air quality impacts, and anticipated reductions in emissions associated with proposed mitigation measures will be quantified.

*Biological Resources:* The Biological Resources chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe the potential project effects to plant communities, forest habitat, wildlife, and wetland and riparian communities, including adverse effects on rare, endangered, candidate, sensitive, and other special-status species for the project site. Effects associated with all project improvements will be included in the analysis. The chapter will be based primarily on project-specific biological resources documentation. Mitigation measures for all identified impacts will be developed consistent with applicable laws and regulations.

*Cultural Resources:* The Cultural Resources chapter of the EIR will describe the potential effects to historical and archaeological resources from buildout of the proposed project. The chapter will be based primarily on a project-specific Archaeological and Architectural Resources Inventory Report. Effects associated with all project improvements will be included in the analysis.

*Energy:* The Energy chapter of the EIR will evaluate whether the proposed project could result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation. The discussion will also evaluate whether the proposed project would conflict with or obstruct a State or local plan for renewable energy. The chapter will review the PCSP to identify energy-related measures that may be applicable to the proposed project.

*Geology and Soils (including Mineral Resources):* The Geology and Soils chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe the potential effects from the project relating to soil erosion, earthquakes, liquefaction, expansive/unstable soils, as well as identify any known paleontological resources or unique geological features within the project area. The chapter will also discuss the potential for significant disruptions to soil or changes in topography due to project development. The chapter will be based primarily on a site-specific Geotechnical Engineering Evaluation, as well as a Paleontological Resources Study. Standard County mitigation measures pertaining to geology and soils will be incorporated into the chapter.

The Geology and Soils chapter will also evaluate whether the project would result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be a value to the region and residents of the State, and/or result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan.

*Hazards and Hazardous Materials:* The Hazards and Hazardous Materials chapter of the EIR will summarize the setting and describe any potential for existing or possible hazardous materials within the

project area, including but not limited to overhead/underground utility lines, or above/below ground storage tanks, etc. The chapter will also assess the potential for the proposed project to create a significant hazard to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Impacts of the environment on a project, as compared to impacts of a project on the environment, are beyond the scope of required CEQA review. The California Supreme Court has held that, "CEQA does not generally require an agency to consider the effects of existing environmental conditions on a proposed project's future users or residents. What CEQA does mandate is an analysis of how a project might exacerbate existing environmental hazards." As such, the mere presence of possible hazardous materials at the site or in the vicinity, should such exist, would be considered an existing environmental condition and, thus, would not be considered an impact under CEQA. Rather, the proposed project could have the potential to result in an impact associated with possible hazardous materials should the proposed project exacerbate the existing conditions (e.g., contaminated soils become airborne during ground-disturbing activities and expose construction workers or future guests of the proposed project). The chapter will be based primarily on project-specific Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs).

*Hydrology and Water Quality:* The Hydrology and Water Quality chapter of the EIR will summarize setting information and identify potential impacts on stormwater drainage, flooding, groundwater (i.e., depletion and recharge), and water quality, including stormwater runoff water quality. The Hydrology and Water Quality chapter will evaluate the proposed project's potential to capture and treat stormwater runoff to prevent surface water and/or groundwater quality degradation, as well as how the proposed project will accommodate runoff from additional impervious surfaces so as not to induce off-site flooding or the capacity of downstream drainage facilities, including those that may pertain to I-80. The chapter will be based primarily on a project-specific Preliminary Drainage Report.

*Land Use and Planning:* The Land Use and Planning chapter of the EIR will evaluate the consistency of the proposed project with the policies and regulations included in the Placer County General Plan, Placer County Parks and Trails Master Plan, and County Code adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

*Noise:* The Noise chapter of the EIR will be based on a project-specific Noise Technical Report. The chapter will address potential noise impacts resulting from project construction and operation, including existing and future traffic noise levels on the local roadway network and any stationary noise sources. Noise-sensitive land uses or activities in the project vicinity will be identified and ambient noise and vibration level measurements on, and in the vicinity of, the project site will be conducted to quantify existing background noise and vibration levels for comparison to the predicted project-generated levels. Noise exposure levels will then be compared to applicable significance criteria in the Placer County General Plan Noise Element and County Code, pursuant to CEQA. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

*Public Services and Utilities:* The Public Services and Utilities chapter of the EIR will evaluate whether the proposed project could increase demands upon local service providers (e.g., fire, law enforcement, schools). In accordance with Appendix G, the focus of the analysis will be on whether the project's demand would require physical alteration of, or need for new governmental facilities, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts.

Additionally, the chapter will evaluate the ability of the proposed utility systems to accommodate the water supply demand and wastewater generation associated with the proposed project. The chapter will also evaluate the receiving landfill's capacity to accommodate the increase in solid waste associated with the proposed project. Electricity and natural gas service will also be addressed in the chapter. The chapter will be based on existing information from the Placer County General Plan and information obtained from direct consultation with appropriate service providers, as well as a project-specific Septic Design Feasibility Study and Domestic Water System Technical Report.

**Transportation:** The Transportation chapter of the EIR will be based on a project-specific Transportation Analysis. Impact determination for CEQA purposes will be based on vehicle miles traveled (VMT), consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, which became effective statewide on July 1, 2020. The VMT analysis will be prepared consistent with Placer County's current guidance regarding analysis of VMT.

The proposed project's impacts to alternative modes such as pedestrian, bicycle and transit facilities will be assessed based on their significance criteria contained in the adopted Placer County guidelines. The EIR chapter will also include an analysis of the proposed project's potential impacts related to conflicting with applicable programs, policies, and ordinances addressing the circulation system, vehicle safety hazards, and emergency access. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

**Tribal Cultural Resources:** The Tribal Cultural Resources chapter will describe the potential effects to tribal cultural resources from buildout of the proposed project. The County will conduct Native American tribal consultation pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 52. Non-confidential input from tribes will be incorporated into the Tribal Cultural Resources chapter. Feasible and appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or reduce adverse impacts will be identified, as needed.

**Wildfire:** The Wildfire chapter of the EIR will address the questions in Section XX, Wildfire, of Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, as well as questions f and g in Section IX, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, related to emergency response and evacuation plans and wildland fires. Specifically, the proposed project will be evaluated to determine if the project would substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. In addition, the chapter will consider whether the proposed project would exacerbate fire risk, as well as whether the project would expose people or structures to significant post-fire risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. Mapping prepared by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) regarding fire hazard severity zones will be reviewed. The chapter will be primarily based on a project-specific Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Plan.

**Statutorily Required Sections:** Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 21100(B)(5), the Statutorily Required Sections chapter of the EIR will address the potential for growth-inducing impacts of the proposed project, focusing on whether removal of any impediments to growth would occur with the proposed project. A summary of any significant and unavoidable impacts identified within the EIR will be included in this chapter, as well as a discussion of significant irreversible impacts. The chapter will generally describe the cumulative setting for the proposed project; however, a detailed description of the subject-specific cumulative setting, as well as analysis of the cumulative impacts, will be included in each technical chapter of the EIR.

**Effects Not Found to be Significant:** Section 15128 of the CEQA Guidelines states that an EIR shall contain a brief statement indicating the reasons that various possible significant effects of a project were determined not to be significant and were, therefore, not discussed in detail in the EIR. Accordingly, the Effects Not Found to be Significant chapter of the EIR will include abbreviated discussions of impacts determined not to be significant.

**Alternatives Analysis:** In accordance with Section 15126.6(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, the EIR will include an analysis of a range of alternatives, including a No Project Alternative. Consideration will be given to potential off-site locations consistent with CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.6(f)(2), and such locations will be determined in consultation with County staff. If it is determined that an off-site alternative is not feasible or is unnecessary, the EIR will include a discussion describing why such a conclusion was reached. The project alternatives will be selected when more information related to project impacts is available in order to be designed to avoid or substantially lessen one or more significant project impacts. The chapter will also include a section of alternatives considered but dismissed, if necessary. The Alternatives Analysis chapter will describe the alternatives and identify the environmentally superior alternative. The alternatives will be analyzed at a level of detail less than that of the proposed project; however, the analyses will include sufficient detail to allow a meaningful comparison of the impacts. Such detail may include conceptual site plans for each alternative, basic quantitative traffic information (e.g., trip generation), as well as a table that will compare the impacts of each alternative to those of the proposed project.