

18 OTHER TRPA-MANDATED SECTIONS

18.1 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

Where appropriate, topics and specific issues that are not applicable to the Shoreline Plan alternatives have been scoped out of this EIS. Topics that do not require analysis because the Shoreline Plan alternatives either do not involve those elements, or are not geographically or temporally linked to them, are discussed below along with the reason for dismissal.

Light and Glare. Development under the Shoreline Plan alternatives would not produce new sources of light or glare. Piers and boat ramps would be prohibited from having lighting, and other shorezone structures such as buoys, slips, boat lifts, and swim platforms would not include lights. The components of marina expansions regulated by the Shoreline Plan under Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 (or new marinas under Alternative 2) would also not generally be associated with new sources of light or glare, because they would be related to additional moorings. In addition, each future project would require some level of project-specific environmental review that would verify that marina modifications would not result in significant light and glare effects. Boating activities on Lake Tahoe are almost exclusively limited to daytime hours, with the exception of occasional boating during fireworks displays. Therefore, boating would not result to impacts related to light. Reflective materials would not be allowed in construction of any new shorezone structures. Therefore, impacts on light and glare are not addressed in detail in this EIS.

Population and Housing. All shoreline structures would be associated with existing or new primary uses, such as residences, public beaches, or marinas. The Shoreline Plan alternatives would not increase or decrease the amount of or demand for housing, because housing availability and demand are driven by primary land uses not shorezone structures. Therefore, an analysis of housing is not provided in this EIS. Similarly, the Shoreline Plan alternatives would not involve development that would have the ability to redistribute population, or produce population growth in the Region; therefore, impacts on population, including the distribution and displacement of residents, are not further discussed in this EIS.

Recreation Demand. The Shoreline Plan does not propose new development (e.g., residential or tourism development) that would generate new demand for recreation facilities; thus, increased demand for recreation facilities is not addressed in this EIS.

Transit and Other Transportation Modes. Most structures proposed under the Shoreline Plan alternatives would support boating, for which a personal vehicle is generally required; therefore, it is unlikely that any transit demand would be generated by the alternatives. As a result, it is unlikely that the Shoreline Plan alternatives would result in the need for increased transit service. The Shoreline Plan alternatives would not propose new airports, or rail lines, nor would they interfere with or alter existing air or rail travel patterns. Because the alternatives would not affect air or rail travel patterns, the effects on the respective transportation systems are not evaluated within this EIS.

Energy. Shorezone structures allowed under the Shoreline Plan alternatives would not create demand for new sources of energy. There are no energy utilities that would experience substantial new demand, nor new energy connections that would be necessary. Alternative 2 would allow new marinas with a Marina Master Plan, which would undergo project-level environmental review for energy demand and effects on existing utilities; however, it is not expected that there would be considerable consumption of energy associated with operation of a new marina. Construction activities would require mobile equipment to operate but would not consume fuel in quantities that would be significant relative to region-wide fuel consumption. Therefore, energy consumption has not been analyzed in detail as an effect of the Shoreline Plan alternatives in this EIS.

Tree Removal and Forest Resources. None of the Shoreline Plan alternatives would affect old growth forest ecosystems; and, any future tree removal required for the construction of new facilities (e.g., marinas, boat ramps) in the shoreline would be infrequent, minor, and likely similar in magnitude to potential effects under current ordinances. Additionally, modification of shoreline policies and ordinances under any of the alternatives would not change existing policies, Code provisions, project-level environmental review procedures and permitting requirements, sensitive design practices, and standard conditions of approval that address tree removal or the potential introduction and spread of terrestrial invasive species as a result of future projects. Therefore, shoreline ordinance modifications under any of the alternatives are not expected to substantially change conditions related to these resources and issues, and they are not addressed in this EIS.

Flood and Wildland Fire Hazards. A dam constructed at Tahoe City in the early 1900s regulates water flow to the Truckee River from Lake Tahoe at Tahoe City. Because the Shoreline Plan project area is confined to the shorezone and lake levels are regulated by the dam, flooding hazards are not a concern within the shorezone and are not addressed in this EIS. The shorezone does not include lands designated as high fire hazard severity zones. Thus, wildland fire risk is not discussed in this EIS.

Public Services and Utilities. The Shoreline Plan does not involve alterations to or increased need for schools; or for utilities such as power, natural gas, communication systems, water, and wastewater disposal. These issues are therefore not addressed in this EIS.

18.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SHORT-TERM USES OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

Chapter 3 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances requires a discussion of the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity. This requirement recognizes that short-term uses and long-term productivity are linked, and the opportunities acted upon in the near term have corollary opportunity costs in to foregone options and productivity that could have continuing effects well into the future.

This EIS assesses the effects of adoption of a Shoreline Plan for Lake Tahoe. The plan would balance recreational opportunities and preservation of the environment through allocation and regulation of shorezone facilities. Because of the policy-oriented nature of the decisions that are to be made, the EIS is prepared at a programmatic level of analysis commensurate with the level of specificity of the Shoreline Plan alternatives themselves. As such, the analysis focuses on the potential effects of a full-scale buildout of facilities allowed under each alternative and the policies that would guide implementation, as proposed under each alternative, rather than specific projects. However, the Shoreline Plan will be implemented through as-yet-undefined projects that will be accompanied by site-specific project review and environmental documentation following approval of the Shoreline Plan. Those projects will result in the short-term use of the environment, with implications for the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity.

All Shoreline Plan alternatives would allow for some new development, construction of which would result in short-term increases in the use of the shorezone. Construction activities would result in the use of energy and resources to prepare project sites and construct new facilities. Development of shorezone structures as individual projects under the Shoreline Plan would result in short-term construction-related impacts such as interference with local traffic and circulation, air pollutant emissions, temporary noise sources, disturbance of wildlife, and construction-related runoff.

New shorezone development projects would require the use of raw land, including installation of pier foundations, clearing of nearshore vegetation, and other construction disturbance. Once committed to new development, it is unlikely that the land would be returned to a natural state in the near or long term. Effects on soils, habitat, and land uses from placement of new structures would be considered permanent. The resulting increase in development in the shorezone would have associated impacts to aquatic biological

resources, recreation, water quality, air quality and climate change, traffic and circulation, noise, and public safety.

Alternatives 1, 3, and 4 would incentivize the demolition of existing piers in stream mouth protection areas and scenic travel units that are not in attainment of thresholds, which would provide for restoration of those lands. Additionally, all alternatives would allow relocation of structures from sensitive areas, which would necessarily result in the demolition or removal of the old structure. Any demolition and restoration actions would result in short-term disturbance of the removal site, including sensitive areas such as stream mouth protection areas and scenic travel units in nonattainment, but would contribute to long-term improvement in the productivity of sensitive areas and result in environmental benefits (e.g., water quality, soils, scenic) to the region.

The Compact committed the region to establish, attain, and maintain environmental thresholds. These environmental thresholds provide standards and guidance for the Regional Plan and complementary plans, such as the Regional Transportation Plan and Shoreline Plan to implement short-term actions to effectuate long-term productivity. Approval of any of the Shoreline Plan alternatives would support the region's commitment to long-term environmental improvement through control of shorezone growth and implementation of environmentally beneficial programs and policies for implementation.

18.3 IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

A commitment of resources is irreversible and irretrievable when the use or consumption of the resource renders it non-renewable or non-recoverable for future use, such as with fossil fuels or electricity. Activities associated with development of shorezone structures implemented under the Shoreline Plan alternatives would result in the irreversible and irretrievable commitment of energy and material resources primarily during construction of individual projects.

The four Shoreline Plan alternatives include varying levels of new shorezone structures, the range of which is detailed in Chapter 2, "Description of the Proposed Project and Alternatives." The increase in shorezone development ranges among the alternatives, with a low development alternative reflected in Alternative 4, to a high development alternative reflected in Alternative 2. The alternatives balance environmental preservation and restoration with new shorezone development and are intended to propose a range of development levels. Under Alternative 4, there would be a two percent increase in the number of piers, and no other new shorezone structures, while under Alternative 2 there would be over 60 percent more piers, almost 80 percent more moorings, and a more than 25 percent increase in the number of boat ramps (see Exhibits 2-9 through 2-11 in Chapter 2).

Each alternative would allow for some new structures, and in the case of Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would increase boating activity on the lake. Energy and fossil fuels would be expended in the form of gasoline, diesel fuel, and oil for vehicles equipment in support of construction and maintenance. Alternative 2 would also increase boating activity to a point where there would be an increase in fuel consumption from boating, even considering offsets from cleaner boat fleet engines at buildout year 2040. For Alternatives 1, 3, and 4, there would be an overall decrease in fuel consumption related to boat use at buildout of the plan, and the increase in fuel consumption associated with those alternatives would be attributable to construction and the increase in vehicle miles traveled.

Alternatives 1, 3, and 4 would provide incentives to transfer existing piers out of stream mouth protection areas and scenic travel units that are not in attainment. Alternatives 1, 3, and 4 would also allow relocation and transfer of structures in effort to achieve and maintain environmental thresholds and allow boat ramp relocation to adapt to low lake levels. All alternatives would allow exchanges between different mooring types. Construction activities and demolition of existing facilities would generate nonrecyclable materials, such as solid waste and construction debris. Electricity and natural gas would be expended for the construction and operation of new marinas under Alternative 2. Construction of new marinas would also

involve irreversible changes associated with excavation, grading, and construction activities and would affect air quality, coverage, and water quality. These changes would be addressed through project-specific review and environmental analysis and implementation of site-specific mitigation measures; however, the potential for disturbance would represent an irreversible change. In addition, many construction activities would entail the use of concrete, glass, plastic, and petroleum products, as well as an increase in energy consumption, which would be irreversible and irretrievable upon expenditure.

18.4 GROWTH-INDUCING IMPACTS

Section 3.7.2(H) of the TRPA Code of Ordinances requires that an EIS evaluate the growth-inducing impacts of a proposed project. Growth can be induced by eliminating obstacles to growth or by stimulating economic activity in a way that encourages increases in population in the Tahoe region. Growth in the Tahoe region is limited by the development commodities (also referred to as development rights) system through the allocation of residential, commercial, and tourist accommodation commodities that are capped and allocated under the Regional Plan. By regulating these commodities, the Regional Plan limits the number of residents and tourists that the region can accommodate. As described under Impact 4-1 in Chapter 4, “Land Use,” the Shoreline Plan alternatives would not alter the amount of growth forecasted for the region under the Regional Plan.

Although the Shoreline Plan alternatives neither propose nor approve any specific shorezone projects, the alternatives would allow new development and redevelopment of shorezone structures. The types of shorezone structures that would be allowed (piers, buoys and other moorings, boat ramps, and other shorezone features) relate to the recreational experience at Lake Tahoe and would neither accommodate nor facilitate an increase in the capacity of the region to support new residents, tourists, students, or workers. The addition of new public access facilities could attract an increase in the number of day-use visitors to the region; however, longer-term visitation is influenced to a greater degree by the availability of overnight accommodations, which is unaffected by the Shorezone Plan. Visitors would not increase the residential, commercial, or tourist accommodation capacity of the region because that capacity is limited by the Regional Plan. Therefore, while the Shoreline Plan would allow new structures, the structures associated with the Shoreline Plan alternatives—by their nature—would not be growth inducing.