

3.7 SCENIC RESOURCES

This section describes the visual setting and scenic resources of the study area, identifies impacts on scenic quality that would result from Alternatives 1–5, and recommends mitigation measures intended to preserve scenic quality. The study area is visible from U.S. 50 (Roadway Travel Unit 36B), which is designated as a state scenic highway. The study area is not visible from Lake Tahoe, from features mapped in TRPA’s Scenic Resource Evaluation, or from any TRPA-identified public recreation area. Therefore, a TRPA scenic analysis involving views related to the lake is not required for the proposed project. The impact analysis following the affected environment description is based on a qualitative evaluation of consistency with the TRPA Code of Ordinances and the TRPA Scenic Resource Environmental Thresholds. Consistency with TRPA goals and policies is presented in Section 3.2, “Land Use,” Table 3.2-1. Cumulative scenic impacts are addressed in Section 3.16, “Cumulative Impacts.” The project’s effects on thresholds are described in Section 4.6, “Consequences for Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities.”

3.7.1 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

REGULATORY SETTING

Federal

No Federal laws, regulations, or executive orders apply to scenic resources within the study area.

State

California’s Scenic Highway Program

California’s Scenic Highway Program was created by the California State Legislature in 1963 and is managed by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The goal of this program is to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would affect the aesthetic value of the land adjacent to highways. A highway may be designated “scenic” depending on how much of the natural landscape travelers can see, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on travelers’ enjoyment of the view. Official designation requires a local jurisdiction to enact a scenic corridor protection program that protects and enhances scenic resources (Caltrans 2005).

U.S. 50 from Placerville to the South Lake Tahoe city limit is officially designated as a scenic highway by the state. Much of the study area is visible from U.S. 50. Existing views from U.S. 50 include the driving range, parking areas, clubhouse, several golf holes, and the Upper Truckee River riparian corridor and surrounding forest in the background, as well as private residences.

Lake Valley State Recreation Area General Plan

The *Lake Valley State Recreation Area General Plan*, as approved by the California Park and Recreation Commission in January 1988, provides guidelines for the long-term management and development of the Lake Valley State Recreation Area (SRA) in the Tahoe Basin. The plan contains the following policy that is applicable to scenic resources in the study area:

- ▶ **Policy Esthetic 1:** The department shall provide a setting within Lake Valley SRA that minimizes human influences as much as possible without obstructing the unit’s purpose, which is presented as follows.

“The purpose of Lake Valley SRA is to make available to the people for their enjoyment and inspiration the 18-hole golf course, and the scenic Upper Truckee River and its environs.”

Washoe Meadows State Park

No general plan has been prepared for Washoe Meadows State Park (SP), because it is an undeveloped unit. The “Purpose” of Washoe Meadows SP is to preserve and protect a wet meadow area associated with the Angora Creek and the Upper Truckee River at the southwestern side of the Lake Tahoe basin.

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

TRPA regulates growth and development in the Lake Tahoe region through the *Regional Plan for the Lake Tahoe Basin* (Regional Plan). TRPA’s Regional Plan, adopted in 1987, consists of several documents: the Goals and Policies, Code of Ordinances, Water Quality Management Plan, Plan Area Statements (PAS), and Scenic Quality Improvement Plan (SQIP).

1987 Regional Plan

The 1987 Regional Plan had a 20-year scope and is currently being reviewed and updated through a collaborative effort led by TRPA. These agencies are working together to update several important environmental documents for the Tahoe Basin. These Regional Plan updates will guide land management, resource management, and environmental regulations in the Tahoe Basin over the next 20 years. The Regional Plan update is anticipated to be completed by 2011.

Regional Plan Goals and Policies

The Goals and Policies document of the 1987 Regional Plan establishes an overall framework for development and environmental conservation in the Lake Tahoe region. The Goals and Policies present the overall approach to meeting TRPA’s environmental threshold carrying capacities, also known as thresholds (see below), and establish guiding policy for each resource element. The Conservation Element (Chapter IV) of the Goals and Policies document considers 10 subelements, including a Scenic subelement. The Scenic subelement states:

Scenic quality is perhaps the most often identified natural resource of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The Basin affords views of a magnificent lake setting within a forested mountainous environment. The unique combination of visual elements provides for exceptionally high aesthetic values. The maintenance of the Basin’s scenic quality largely depends on careful regulation of the type, location, and intensity of land uses.

The Scenic subelement contains the following goals and policies relevant to the proposed alternatives.

GOAL 1: Maintain and Restore the Scenic Qualities of the Natural Appearing Landscape. As with many of the Region’s natural resources, the scenic qualities of the Basin are vulnerable to change. Modifying the natural scenic features of the Basin is a by-product of development, but such impacts need not be devastating. A coordinated effort that incorporates architectural design and location considerations in the project review process is a useful means for promoting scenic and aesthetic values. Policies to achieve this goal are consistent with the adopted environmental thresholds.

► Policies:

1. All proposed development shall examine impacts to the identified landscape views from roadways, bike paths, public recreation areas, and Lake Tahoe.
2. Any development proposed in areas targeted for scenic restoration or within a unit highly sensitive to change shall demonstrate the effect of the project on the 1982 travel route ratings of the scenic thresholds.

3. The factors or conditions that contribute to scenic degradation in identified areas need to be recognized and appropriately considered in restoration programs to improve scenic quality.

Code of Ordinances

The applicable provisions regarding aesthetic standards in the TRPA Code of Ordinances are summarized below.

Design Standards

Chapter 30 of the Code of Ordinances contains design standards, including standards for building design, landscaping, and lighting. The TRPA Design Review Guidelines summarize the requirements of the Code of Ordinances and guidelines or suggestions for attainment of the standards (TRPA 1989a: 30-5–30-6). Standards relevant to building design, landscaping, and lighting associated with the proposed alternatives, included within Standard 30.8 of the TRPA Design Review Guidelines, are listed below.

- (2) **Lighting Levels.** Avoid consistent overall lighting and overly bright lighting. The location of lighting should respond to the anticipated use and should not exceed the amount of light actually required by users. Lighting for pedestrian movement should illuminate entrances, changes in grade, path intersections, and other areas along paths which, if left unlit, would cause the user to feel insecure. As a general rule of thumb, one foot candle per square foot over the entire project area is adequate. Lighting suppliers and manufacturers have lighting design handbooks which can be consulted to determine fixture types, illumination needs and light standard heights.
- (5) **Lighting Height.** As a rule, the light source should be kept as low to the ground as possible while ensuring safe and functional levels of illumination. Area lighting should be directed downward with no splay of lighting directed offsite. The height of light fixtures or standards must meet the height limitations in Chapter 22. Direct light downward in order to avoid sky lighting. Any light source over 10 feet high should incorporate a cut-off shield to prevent the light source from being directly visible from areas offsite. The height of luminaries should be in scale with the setting and generally should not exceed 10–12 feet.

Scenic Standards

Chapter 30, “Design Standards,” of the Code of Ordinances contains standards pertaining to scenic quality. Chapter 30 establishes a process for analyzing projects for scenic quality and defines those circumstances that require preparation of scenic assessments and/or other documents. It also requires payment of a security deposit equal to the cost of scenic mitigation measures for projects visible from nonattainment areas, and a 5-year review for continued presence and maintenance (described in more detail below). The study area would not be visible from any nonattainment areas. Section 30.12 describes scenic quality standards for roadway and shoreline units, and for public recreation areas and bicycle trails, as listed below.

- ▶ **30.12 Scenic Quality Standards:** All projects and activities shall comply with the following standards:
 - **30.12.A Roadway and Shoreline Unit Scenic Quality:** The project shall not cause a decrease in the numerical ratings assigned to roadway or shoreline units, including the scenic quality rating of the individual resources within each unit, as recorded in the 1982 Scenic Resources Inventory and shown in Tables 13-3, 13-5, 13-8, and 13-9 of the Study Report for the Establishment of Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities, October 1982. The criteria for rating scenic quality as identified in the study report cited herein shall be used to determine if a project will cause a decrease in the numerical rating.

Plan Area Statements

The entire study area is located within PAS 119, Country Club Meadow (see Exhibit 3.2-1 in Section 3.2, “Land Use”). One special policy includes a reference to scenic quality. Special Policy 8 in PAS 119 (TRPA 1987: 2) states:

8. Remedial water quality and scenic quality improvements, including bill board removal, on land which exhibits noncompliance with the Agency's Regional Plan and Code of Ordinances shall be required.

Several billboards in the planning area have been removed in the past, in compliance with this policy.

Scenic Quality Improvement Program/Environmental Improvement Program

The SQIP was adopted to provide a program for implementing physical improvements to the built environment in the Tahoe Basin. The SQIP is intended to contribute to the attainment of the scenic resources thresholds in the Goals and Policies document of the Regional Plan (see above) and serves as an implementation guide for the Regional Plan. The SQIP is an overall action plan to specifically improve the scenic quality of 23 roadways and four shoreline travel routes that do not meet the scenic resources thresholds (TRPA 1989b: 1).

The SQIP (TRPA 1989b: 26) states:

As a general rule, individual projects can be considered not to be contributing to threshold degradation when the project's individual design elements conform to or exceed adopted design standards, or the guidelines set forth in the Design Review Guidelines.

Design standards and design review guidelines are listed under the scenic standards and design review guidelines/contrast rating system sections, respectively, above. The Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) adopted in 1998 and updated in 2001 incorporates elements of the SQIP. The EIP includes a list of specific projects throughout the basin that are needed to attain and maintain the thresholds (TRPA 2001), including the proposed project.

TRPA Threshold Carrying Capacities

TRPA thresholds are standards or environmental quality targets to be achieved in the Tahoe Basin. TRPA cannot approve projects that would cause a significant adverse effect on a threshold area without appropriate mitigation. The thresholds discussed below were adopted by TRPA in 2002. TRPA conducts a comprehensive evaluation of all thresholds every 5 years. In 2007 TRPA released to the public the *April 2007 Threshold Update Environmental Assessment (EA)* and the *2006 Draft Threshold Evaluation Report*. The EA evaluates the proposal to revise some of the existing environmental thresholds while the Draft Threshold Evaluation Report presents the results of the evaluation of the 1982 Thresholds and recommends adjustments to the existing thresholds based on the results of the evaluation and on input from the Pathway process. In September of 2007, TRPA issued the environmental threshold report and threshold environmental compliance forms were approved by the TRPA Governing Board. Those applicable to the study area are discussed below.

SR-1 Travel Route Ratings

The TRPA travel route rating threshold tracks long-term cumulative changes to views seen from Federal and State highways in urban, transitional, and natural landscapes in the region and to the views seen from Lake Tahoe looking toward the shore. Roadways have been divided into 53 travel segments (called "roadway travel units"), each representing a continuous two-directional viewshed of similar visual character. Lake Tahoe's shoreline is divided into 33 separate "shoreline travel units." Roadway Travel Route ratings use the following six threshold criteria to evaluate each unit:

1. Human-made features along roadways and shoreline
2. Physical distractions to driving along roadways
3. Roadway characteristics
4. Views of the lake from roadways
5. General landscape views from roadways and shoreline
6. Variety of scenery from roadways and shoreline

The only travel unit with views of the study area is Roadway Travel Unit 36B, which includes U.S. 50. The 2006 Threshold Evaluation Report determined that this area is in attainment. Areas that are in attainment are required to maintain the scenic quality of the area; nonattainment areas are required to implement projects to improve scenic quality.

SR-2 Scenic Quality Ratings

The purpose of the TRPA scenic quality threshold is to maintain or enhance views of individual existing scenic resources. The scenic resources in the region include the views of the natural landscape and distinctive natural features that were identified, mapped, described, and evaluated as part of the 1982 Scenic Resource Evaluation. The subcomponents that make up the scenic resources are:

- ▶ foreground, middle-ground, and background views of the natural landscape from roadways;
- ▶ views to Lake Tahoe from roadways;
- ▶ views of Lake Tahoe and natural landscape from roadway entry points into the region;
- ▶ unique landscape features, such as streams, beaches, and rock formations that add interest and variety, as seen from roadways;
- ▶ views of the shoreline, the water's edge, and the foreground as seen from the lake;
- ▶ views of the backdrop landscape, including the skyline, as seen from the lake; and
- ▶ visual features seen from the lake that are points of particular visual interest on or near the shore.

Numerical scenic quality ratings are derived for each mapped scenic resource, using four visual indicators—unity, vividness, variety, and intactness—as subcomponents of the composite rating. According to the TRPA 2006 Threshold Evaluation Report, unity is the degree to which the visual resources of a scene join together to form a single, coherent, harmonious unit. Vividness is a measure of contrasting elements, such as color, line, and shape, marked differences seen as related, or repetition of similarities—sometimes referred to as distinctiveness. Variety is numerous or different parts seen together and can be referred to as richness. Intactness describes the degree to which a landscape retains its natural condition, or the degree to which modifications emphasize or enhance the natural condition of the landscape.

These four indicators are each rated on a scale from zero (absent) to three (high). The ratings for all four indicators are summed to yield the scenic quality threshold rating described below. Each resource is defined by the length of the resource and the areas seen from that unit.

SR-3 Public Recreation Area Scenic Quality Thresholds

The TRPA public recreation area scenic quality threshold applies to specific public recreation areas, including beaches, campgrounds, ski areas, and segments of Class I and Class II bicycle trails. Public recreation areas with views of scenic resources are valuable because they are major public gathering places, hold high scenic values, and are places where people are static (compared to people on the travel routes) and have more time to focus their attention on the views and scenic resources. Scenic resources as seen from the public recreation areas are composed of the following subcomponents:

- ▶ Views of the lake and natural landscape from the recreation area
- ▶ Views of natural features in the recreation area
- ▶ Views of human-made features in or adjacent to the recreation area that influence the viewing experience

TRPA's 1993 Lake Tahoe Scenic Resource Evaluation did not identify any TRPA-designated public recreation areas with views of the study area. Neither Lake Valley SRA nor Washoe Meadows SP is designated by TRPA as

a public recreation area subject to these thresholds. The public recreation area nearest to the study area is Heavenly Valley Ski Resort. The study area is located approximately 7 miles from the ski resort. Based on this evaluation, the study area would not be visible from any TRPA-identified public campgrounds or segments of TRPA-identified bike trails.

SR-4 Community Design

The community design threshold is a policy statement that applies to the built environment and is not restricted to roadways or shoreline units. Design standards and guidelines found in the Code of Ordinances, the Scenic Quality Improvement Program, and in the adopted Community Plans provide specific implementation direction. To secure threshold attainment, design standards and guidelines must be widely implemented to improve travel route ratings and produce built environments compatible with the natural, scenic, and recreational values of the region. The visual quality of the built environment has also become an issue of increasing importance to residents, local businesses, and community leaders.

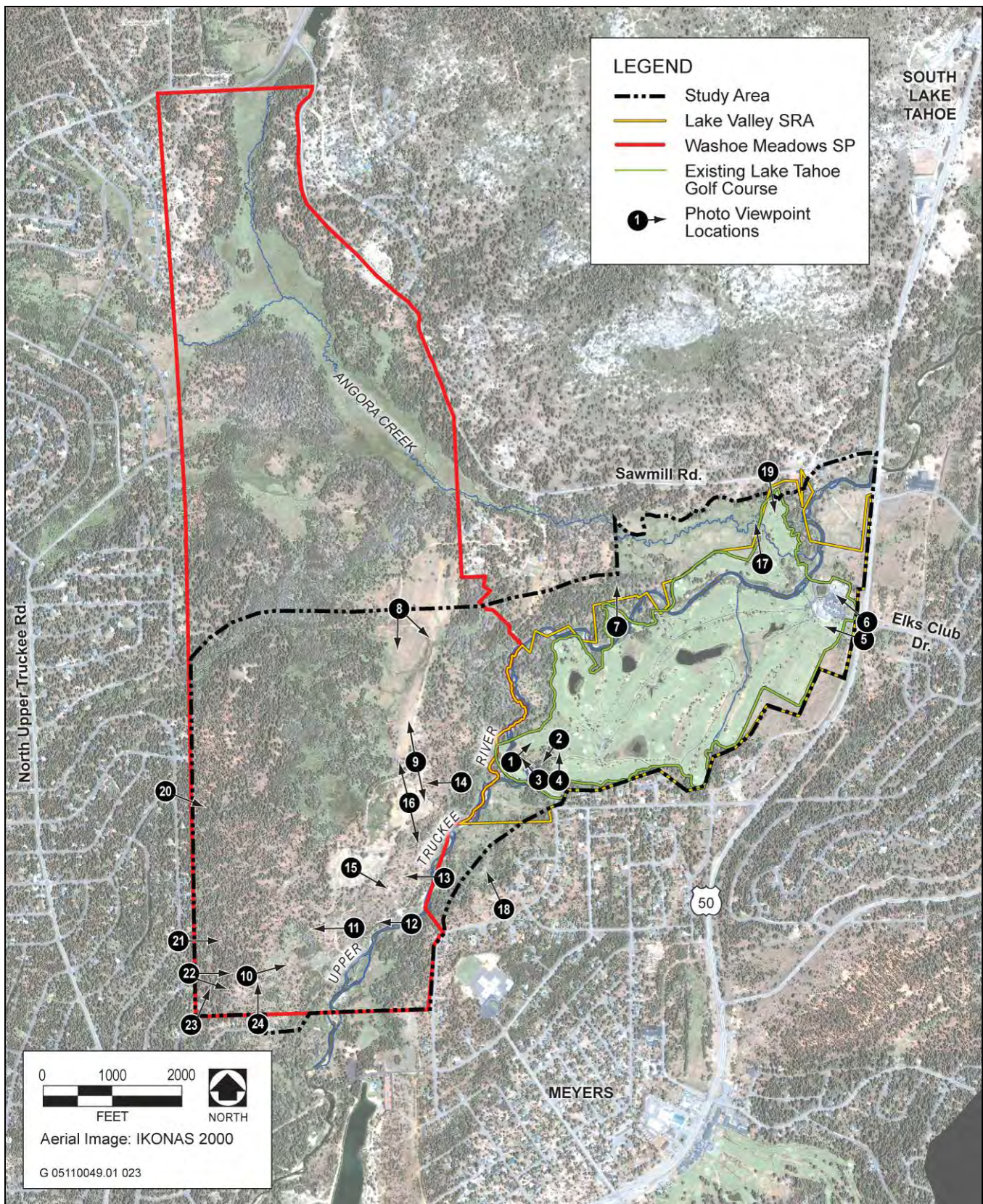
AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE STUDY AREA

A map showing representative key viewpoints with views toward and within the study area is shown in Exhibit 3.7-1. Photographs of these viewpoints are shown in Exhibits 3.7-2 through 3.7-25.

The eastern half of the study area consists of the Lake Valley SRA, which includes the Lake Tahoe Golf Course and a portion of the Upper Truckee River that runs through the golf course (Exhibit 3.7-2). Visual attributes of the golf course include mowed greens, golf course holes, sand traps, and small bridges that cross the river in several locations (Exhibit 3.7-3). Golf course greens extend to the river's edge in most areas, and in numerous areas along this reach of the river, the riverbank is unvegetated with exposed dirt and rock (Exhibit 3.7-4). At many of these locations environmental bank protection materials, such as logs, root wads, and rock have been placed along the bank to reduce erosion (Exhibit 3.7-5). Areas surrounding the golf course greens are forested, and some large trees and groupings of trees are interspersed throughout the golf course. A driving range, clubhouse, and parking lot are located on the northeastern edge of the golf course, adjacent to U.S. 50 (Exhibits 3.7-6 and 3.7-7). The parking lot and buildings for the golf course are existing sources of light and glare (State Parks 1988: 32).

The western half of the study area consists of Washoe Meadows SP, which occupies approximately 620 acres of open meadow, woodland, forested areas, as well as some visually degraded areas (i.e., former quarries), (Exhibit 3.7-8). Washoe Meadows SP is primarily forested, with stands of lodgepole and Jeffrey pine trees. A section of the Upper Truckee River runs through the southeast corner of the park. This section of the river has low-lying riparian vegetation along the banks, which has resulted in fewer exposed banks and less erosion than along the golf course reach of the river. A municipal sewer and associated gravel access road run north to south through the eastern portion of the park. Although the park has not been developed, it is used for numerous informal, dispersed recreation activities and includes unmaintained volunteer trails throughout the park. These trails provide views of the existing golf course, forest, the Upper Truckee River, and other habitats within Washoe Meadows SP (Exhibits 3.7-9 through 3.7-16). Near the center of Washoe Meadows SP is a fen that stays wet year-round. Just southeast of the fen are two large open areas and several smaller areas that were once visually degraded sand and gravel quarries (Exhibit 3.7-17). One of these areas has been filled, recontoured, and revegetated; the other quarry areas are still in a degraded condition visible in the landscape.



Source: EDAW (now AECOM) 2008

Study Area Viewpoints

Exhibit 3.7-1



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

Views to the Northeast of River in Foreground and Golf Course in Middleground (Viewpoint 1)

Exhibit 3.7-2



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

Golf Course Bridge across the Upper Truckee River with Adjacent Bank Protection (Viewpoint 2)

Exhibit 3.7-3



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

Eroding Riverbank along the Upper Truckee River with Adjacent Golf Fairway (Viewpoint 3)

Exhibit 3.7-4



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

Environmental Bank Protection along the Upper Truckee River (Viewpoint 4) Exhibit 3.7-5



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

View of the Golf Course Entrance, Clubhouse, and Driving Range from U.S. 50 (Viewpoint 5)

Exhibit 3.7-6



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

View of Golf Course Maintenance Building from U.S. 50 (Viewpoint 6)

Exhibit 3.7-7



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

View to the East from the Golf Course (Viewpoint 7)

Exhibit 3.7-8



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the Southeast from Trail within Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 8)

Exhibit 3.7-9



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the South from Trail within Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 8)

Exhibit 3.7-10



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the North from Trail within Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 9) Exhibit 3.7-11



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the South from Trail within Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 9)

Exhibit 3.7-12



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the East from within Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 10)

Exhibit 3.7-13



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

Fen in Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 11)

Exhibit 3.7-14



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

**View to the West of Upper Truckee River from Bakersfield Trailhead
(Viewpoint 12)**

Exhibit 3.7-15



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the West of Upper Truckee River from North of Bakersfield Trailhead (Viewpoint 13)

Exhibit 3.7-16



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2006

North Lobe of the Former Quarry Site in Washoe Meadows State Park (Viewpoint 14)

Exhibit 3.7-17



Source: Photo taken by State Parks in 2006

**South Lobe of the Former Quarry Site in Washoe Meadows State Park
(Viewpoint 15)**

Exhibit 3.7-18



Source: Photo taken by State Parks in 2007

**North Lobe of the Former Quarry Site in Washoe Meadows State Park
(Viewpoint 16)**

Exhibit 3.7-19



Source: Photo taken by State Parks in 2007

**North Lobe of the Former Quarry Site in Washoe Meadows State Park
(Viewpoint 16)**

Exhibit 3.7-20



Source: Photo taken by State Parks in 2008

Existing Golf Course near Hole 11 and Angora Creek (Viewpoint 17)

Exhibit 3.7-21

VISUAL CHARACTER OF THE SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT

The Tahoe Basin is renowned for its natural beauty. The scenic resources of the surrounding area are enjoyed as a backdrop for visitors using the Lake Valley SRA and Washoe Meadows SP. Rugged peaks, a river with perennial flow, meadows, and forested slopes characterize the scenery (Exhibit 3.7-8). The Lake Tahoe Airport lies approximately 1 mile northeast of the study area, and airplanes regularly pass nearby. Residential areas and/or U.S. 50 are visible from most portions of the golf course. Views of the surrounding area from the Washoe Meadows portion of the study area are sometimes screened or obscured, because of the stands of pines that cover the park. However, current forest management in the Basin is focused on reducing fuels in the urban interface, often removing 50% of trees or more, with the long term goal of maintaining open canopy, low-density forest. These practices occur throughout Washoe Meadows SP. Sewer line manholes and power lines that serve nearby residential areas run along portions of the Upper Truckee River and U.S. 50, respectively, and are visible from the study area (State Parks 1988: 32).

North of the Lake Valley SRA portion of the study area are Sawmill Road, stands of pine trees, and rugged mountain peaks. The area east and south of the Lake Valley SRA includes residences, U.S. 50, and mountain peaks. The area to the west of the Lake Valley SRA is Washoe Meadows SP, which is forested. North of the Washoe Meadows SP portion of the study area are Lake Tahoe Boulevard and forest. East of Washoe Meadows SP are the golf course, forest, and rugged peaks, and to the northeast are residences. Residences, forest, and Lake Baron lie to the south of Washoe Meadows SP, and residences border the entire western edge of the park.

VIEWS FROM THE STUDY AREA

Views from the study area to the north include forest vegetation in the foreground, and in the background, rugged forested and granite mountain peaks. Intervening vegetation obscures most views of Sawmill Road from the golf course. Views to the east include the golf course greens, the driving range, and the river with existing golf cart bridges in the foreground and the clubhouse and intermittent views of U.S. 50 in the background. To the south views include the golf course and several single family homes adjacent to the golf course in the foreground and forest in the background. Views to the west consist of forest. Intervening vegetation and tall stands of pine trees preclude views of the residences to the west, except along the westernmost boundary of Washoe Meadows SP.

VIEWS OF THE STUDY AREA

The visually prominent features of the study area include the golf course, clubhouse and maintenance buildings, and parking lot, as well as the forested area of Washoe Meadows SP. The driving range, clubhouse, maintenance building, and parking lot are all visible from U.S. 50. Views of Washoe Meadows SP from the western side of the property (next to adjacent residential properties) looking eastward consist of forest with scattered, small open areas. Views of the study area from the north include tall stands of pine trees and dense vegetation and open areas. Views of the study area from the south include dense forest and intermittent views of the golf course. Several residences along the south edge of the SRA in the community of Meyers have direct views of the golf course. Travelers on Sawmill Road also have intermittent views of the golf course. Views to the south from Sawmill Road include views of forest and Angora Creek in the foreground, golf course greens in the middle-ground, and mountain peaks in the background (Exhibit 3.7-19).

The Washoe Meadows SP portion of the study area is visible from portions of two-lane residential roads within the North Upper Truckee neighborhood to the west of the park. Portions of Washoe Meadows SP can also be viewed from some residences to the west of the park. Views of dense forest, intervening vegetation, and nearby residences obscure most views of the interior of Washoe Meadows SP and completely obscure views of the existing golf course (Exhibits 3.7-20 and 3.7-25). There are also some intermittent views of distant mountain peaks and open areas within Washoe Meadows SP from some residential roads in this area. The southeast portion of Washoe Meadows SP is also visible from residences on Bakersfield Street. These residences have views of forest and in some locations views of the Upper Truckee River corridor (Exhibit 3.7-18).



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the Northwest of Washoe Meadows State Park from Bakersfield Street at Blue Jay Circle (Viewpoint 18)

Exhibit 3.7-22



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the South of Golf Course from Sawmill Road (Viewpoint 19)

Exhibit 3.7-23



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the Southeast of Washoe Meadows State Park from Delaware Street (Viewpoint 20)

Exhibit 3.7-24



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

View to the East of Washoe Meadows State Park from Delaware Street (Viewpoint 21)

Exhibit 3.7-25



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

**View to the East of Washoe Meadows State Park from Normuk Street
(Viewpoint 22)**

Exhibit 3.7-26



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

**View to the Southeast of Washoe Meadows State Park from Normuk Street
(Viewpoint 23)**

Exhibit 3.7-27



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

**View to the Northeast of Washoe Meadows State Park from Ulmecca Street
(Viewpoint 24)**

Exhibit 3.7-28



Source: Photograph taken by EDAW (now AECOM) in 2008

**View to the North of Washoe Meadows State Park from Chilicothe Street
(Viewpoint 25)**

Exhibit 3.7-29

SCENIC RATINGS OF THE STUDY AREA AND VICINITY

Roadway Travel Unit Ratings

TRPA's Roadway Travel Unit 36B includes the approximately 1.7-mile view corridor along U.S. 50 that extends from the southern boundary of the industrial development along the highway (e.g., the airport, concrete plant, and other repair and storage uses) to the intersection of U.S. 50 and Pioneer Trail. This unit contains moderately rolling terrain, with little development along its length, and has distinctive views to the distant ridge and middle-ground rock formations at the Lake Valley SRA. This unit also offers views of the Upper Truckee River and its associated riparian zone. The unit has a rating of 20 and is currently in attainment, according to the 2006 Threshold Evaluation Report (TRPA 2007). Scenic improvements are required for Roadway Travel Units rated at 15 or below. Between the 1996 and 2006 threshold evaluations the scenic quality of the roadway travel unit was considerably improved resulting from reduced intrusions by human-made features and roadway distractions. Billboards along the highway were removed during this period. Table 3.7-1 shows the Roadway Travel Unit ratings and the threshold criteria for Roadway Travel Unit 36B.

Table 3.7-1 Travel Route Ratings: Adopted and Existing		
Categories	Rating ^a	
	1996 ^b	2006
Roadway Travel Unit 36B^c		
Man-made Features	2	3
Roadway Distractions	2.5	4.5
Road Structure	3	3.5
Lake Views	1	1
Landscape Views	3	4
Variety	3	4
Roadway Unit Total	14.5	20
^a Visual Quality Rating: (1) low, (2) moderate, (3) high. ^b The 1996 scenic rating was a composite of Roadway Travel Units 36A, 36B, and 36C. ^c Attainment Value: Roadway Units (15). Source: TRPA 2007: Appendix 1:13		

Scenic Quality Ratings

TRPA's 1982 Scenic Resource Inventory identifies views of the golf course as Roadway Scenic Resource 36-3, a visual feature in Roadway Travel Unit 36. It is described as follows: "Tahoe Golf Course with low lying forest and rocky outcrop of Twin Peaks to the northwest; distant views of peaks (Echo and Angora) to west. Forested mountains are seen in middle ground to the east." The Scenic Resource Inventory also identifies forest and river corridor views as visual features. Roadway Scenic Resource 36-7 is described as "foreground views of pine forest and scattered residential/commercial development" and Roadway Scenic Resource 36-5 is described as "Truckee River stream zone." All of these scenic resources are within the project vicinity.

Scenic Quality Thresholds for Public Recreation Areas

TRPA's 1993 Lake Tahoe Scenic Resource Evaluation did not identify sensitive lake views within the study area, nor did it identify any TRPA-designated public recreation areas with views of the study area. The nearest TRPA-

designated public recreation area is Heavenly Valley Ski Resort approximately 7 miles to the northeast; the study area would not be visible from this ski area because of distance, intervening vegetation, and intervening structures (Wagstaff and Brady 1993:341–342).

3.7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

For this analysis, significance criteria are based on the checklist presented in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines; the TRPA Initial Environmental Checklist; factual information; observations of the study area landscape; and regulatory standards of Federal, State, and local agencies. In development of mitigation measures for significant impacts of the project, effects on environmental threshold carrying capacities (thresholds) of the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact were considered. The project’s effects on thresholds are further described in Chapter 4, Section 4.5, “Consequences for Environmental Threshold Carrying Capacities.”

CEQA Criteria

Based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, a scenic resources impact is considered significant if implementation of the proposed project would do any of the following:

- ▶ have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista;
- ▶ substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway;
- ▶ substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings; or
- ▶ create a new source of substantial light or glare that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views in the area.

NEPA Criteria

An environmental document prepared to comply with NEPA must consider the context and intensity of the environmental effects that would be caused by or result from the proposed action. Under NEPA, the significance of an effect is used solely to determine whether an EIS must be prepared. The factors that are taken into account under NEPA to determine the significance of an action in terms of the context and the intensity of its effects are encompassed by the CEQA criteria used for this analysis.

TRPA Criteria

Based on TRPA’s Initial Environmental Checklist, an alternative would result in a significant impact on scenic resources if it would:

- ▶ substantially degrade views from any Federal or State highway, Roadway Travel Unit, or the surrounding area;
- ▶ substantially degrade views from any public recreation area or TRPA-designated bicycle trail;
- ▶ block or modify an existing view of Lake Tahoe or other scenic vista seen from a public road or other public area;
- ▶ be inconsistent with the height and design standards required by the applicable ordinance or community plan;

- ▶ be inconsistent with the TRPA SQIP or design review guidelines;
- ▶ include substantial new or modified sources of lighting;
- ▶ cause light from exterior sources to be cast off-site or onto public lands; or
- ▶ create new sources of glare through the siting of the improvements or through the use of reflective materials.

METHODS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The scenic quality of an area is determined through the variety and contrasts of the area’s visual features, the character of those features, and the scope and scale of the scene. The aesthetic quality of an area depends on the relationships between its features and their importance in the overall view. Evaluating scenic resources requires a method that objectively characterizes visual features, assesses their quality in relation to the visual character of the surrounding area, and identifies their importance to the individuals viewing them. This process is derived from established Federal procedures for visual assessment and is commonly used for a variety of project types.

Both natural and created features in a landscape contribute to its perceived visual quality. Landscape characteristics influencing visual quality include geologic, hydrologic, botanical, wildlife, recreation, and urban features. Several sets of criteria have been developed for defining and evaluating visual quality. A commonly used set of criteria includes the concepts of vividness, intactness, and unity. None of these is itself equivalent to visual quality; all three must be high to indicate high quality. These terms are defined as follows (FHWA 1983:6):

- ▶ “Vividness” is the visual power or memorability of landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual patterns.
- ▶ “Intactness” is the visual integrity of the natural and human-built landscape and its freedom from encroaching elements.
- ▶ “Unity” is the visual coherence and compositional harmony of the landscape considered as a whole.

The analysis of this study uses a qualitative descriptive method for characterizing and evaluating the visual resources of the areas that could be affected by the proposed project. The quality of views of areas that could be affected by the proposed project and alternatives is evaluated based on the relative degree of vividness, intactness, and unity apparent in views and also on viewer sensitivity. Viewer sensitivity is a function of several factors:

- ▶ visibility of the landscape,
- ▶ proximity of viewers to the visual resources,
- ▶ frequency and duration of views,
- ▶ number of viewers,
- ▶ types of individuals and groups of viewers, and
- ▶ viewers’ expectations.

The sensitivity of a view of the landscape is also determined by the extent of the public’s concern for a particular view. Areas of high visual sensitivity are highly visible to the general public. Scenic highways, tourist routes, and recreation areas are considered more visually sensitive than more urbanized locations. A determination finding that a potential visual impact has significance would be based on a change in visual character as determined by the obstruction of a public view, creation of an aesthetically offensive public view, or adverse changes to objects having aesthetic significance. A view’s distance from landscape elements plays an important role in the determination of an area’s visual quality. Landscape elements are considered higher or lower in visual importance based on their position relative to the viewer. Generally, the closer a resource is to the viewer, the more dominant, and, therefore, the more visually important, it is to the viewer.

IMPACTS FOUND TO BE LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT AND NOT DISCUSSED FURTHER

TRPA-designated public recreation area or bicycle trail—Based on the 1993 TRPA scenic evaluation there are no TRPA-designated public recreation areas or bicycle trails with views of the study area. There is no current update to the 1993 scenic inventory. The Sawmill bike trail is considered a designated Class I Shared Use Path but has not been added to the list of scenic bikeways. Since the trail is immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 50, scenic impacts on the bike path are addressed through scenic corridor impacts discussions below.

Views of Lake Tahoe—The study area is not visible from Lake Tahoe and does not provide any views of Lake Tahoe. Therefore, this topic will not be discussed further.

IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Alternative 1: No Project/No Action: Existing River and 18-Hole Regulation Golf Course

IMPACT 3.7-1 (Alt. 1) Potential for Short-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B. *The study area is within view from U.S. 50, which is a designated State scenic highway and is within Roadway Travel Unit 36B. No short-term construction activities would be associated with Alternative 1 that would result in short-term changes in views from U.S. 50 or the surrounding area; therefore, this impact would be less than significant.*

Under Alternative 1, existing conditions in the study area would continue into the future. The reach of the Upper Truckee River within the study area would not be restored and would continue to erode and transport sediment to Lake Tahoe, and the 18-hole regulation golf course would remain as it currently exists, and views of the golf course would remain unchanged. Repairs to the river and golf course would continue on an emergency or as-needed basis, as has occurred in the recent past. There would be short-term construction-related changes in views associated with future repairs to the river and golf course; however, these changes would be temporary and minor. There would be no changes to Washoe Meadows SP.

Because Alternative 1 would not include any new facilities or changes to existing facilities and short-term construction activities associated with this alternative would be temporary and minor, there would be no substantial short-term changes in views from Roadway Travel Unit 36B, U.S. 50, or the surrounding area under Alternative 1. This impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-2 (Alt. 1) Potential for Long-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B. *No new facilities are proposed under Alternative 1; however, there could be minor changes in long-term views associated with repairs to the river or golf course. These modifications are not expected to change views from Roadway Travel Unit 36B or U.S. 50. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.*

As discussed above for Impact 3.7-1 (Alt. 1), Alternative 1 would not include any new permanent facilities or long-term changes in views associated with new or modified facilities. However, repairs to existing bank stabilization sites and infrastructure and additional spot stabilization may occur in response to erosion, other damage, or failure, as they do today, which could result in long-term changes of the visual character of the river as viewed from within the golf course or surrounding areas. These changes would be a continuation of existing river stabilization activities and are expected to be minor. In addition, these changes are not expected to change views from Roadway Travel Unit 36B or U.S. 50. Therefore, there would be no substantial long-term changes in views or the visual character of the area. This impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-3 (Alt. 1) **Potential for Increases in Light or Glare.** *No new sources of light or glare would be introduced as part of Alternative 1. No impact would occur.*

Alternative 1 would not include any nighttime construction or new facilities that would introduce any new short-term or long-term sources of light or glare. Thus, light and glare in the study area would not change as a result of Alternative 1. No impact would occur.

No mitigation is required.

Alternative 2: River Ecosystem Restoration with Reconfigured 18-Hole Regulation Golf Course

IMPACT 3.7-1 (Alt. 2) **Potential for Short-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B.** *Construction activities within the study area may be visible from U.S. 50, the existing golf course, and trails within Washoe Meadows SP and may be visible or partially visible from adjacent residential neighborhoods. In addition, construction vehicles and equipment would travel on U.S. 50, which is designated as a scenic highway. Because construction-related scenic effects would be temporary and limited to the visibility of typical construction vehicles and ground-level activities, this impact would be less than significant.*

Implementation of Alternative 2 would include construction activities associated with relocating golf course holes to the west side of the river within Washoe Meadows SP, restoration of the river and floodplain, removal of existing golf course bridges and addition of one replacement bridge, tree removal, and paving the grassy area at the golf course entrance. Construction would take place between May 1 and October 15 (possibly November 1 if weather allows and an extension is granted) of each year for a 3- to 4-year period. During these construction windows, heavy equipment and associated vehicles, construction workers, staging areas, and construction activities would be visible or partially visible from surrounding areas. Under this alternative, there would be up to 12 staging areas; however, these would primarily be in previously disturbed areas.

Roadway Travel Unit 36B includes the approximately 1.7-mile view corridor along U.S. 50 that has views of the study area. This unit has a rating of 20 and is currently in attainment, according to the 2006 Threshold Evaluation Report (TRPA 2007). Construction activities associated with relocating a portion of the golf course and paving the unpaved parking area at the golf course entrance would be visible from U.S. 50. In addition, large construction vehicles and equipment would use U.S. 50 as a travel route to and from the study area, which could degrade views along the highway. There would also be short-term views of construction staging areas from U.S. 50: one adjacent to the existing golf course parking area and one within the existing driving range. Views of staging areas would include views of construction equipment, materials, and vehicles. Although construction of this alternative could cause changes in views for travelers on U.S. 50, these changes would be temporary and not substantial (i.e., visible construction vehicles and ground-level activity, but no tall, prominent, or long-term construction features). Thus, construction activities would not substantially degrade views from Roadway Travel Unit 36B or U.S. 50.

Construction activities and staging areas would also be visible to golfers, trail users, and adjacent neighborhoods. These activities would include paving near the entrance of the golf course, relocating golf course holes to the west side of the river and removing associated trees, and making widespread river modifications, including removing and replacing a bridge. All viewer groups would be affected by this change in visual quality, although the effect would vary in degree depending on the viewer location and sensitivity. Although construction of Alternative 2 could cause some changes in views from U.S. 50 and surrounding areas, these changes would be temporary and minor. Construction activities would also be intermittent and would occur only during the designated work periods. This impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-2 (Alt. 2) **Potential for Long-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B.** *There would be long-term changes in views of the golf course in the current Washoe Meadows SP and unpaved parking area. The unpaved parking area changes would be visible from U.S. 50 under Alternative 2. Alternative 2 would include removal of trees and reconfiguration of golf course holes that would change views for trail users within Washoe Meadows SP and for residents south and west of Washoe Meadows SP. Although changes in views from U.S. 50 would be minor and would not degrade long-term views, changes in views from surrounding neighborhoods and trails could be substantial. Therefore, this impact would be significant.*

Under Alternative 2, golf course holes would be relocated to the west side of the river within Washoe Meadows SP, requiring substantial grading and tree removal; the area along the river previously occupied by golf course would be restored; and the unpaved parking area north of the golf course entrance would be converted to a paved parking area. These activities would result in visual changes to both the eastern and western portions of the study area. Paving of the unpaved parking area would be visible from U.S. 50.

Eastern Area – Lake Valley SRA

Under Alternative 2, there would be long-term changes in views of the golf course, some of which would be visible from U.S. 50. Several golf course holes currently located along the river would be relocated to the west side of the river, and the area adjacent to the river would be restored. All five of the existing bridges across the river would also be removed under this alternative and replaced with one longer span bridge. There would be brief views of this area from U.S. 50 that would change from golf course greens to native landscape. However, changes in long-term views from U.S. 50 associated with relocating golf course holes would be minimal and are not considered adverse because native riparian landscape would be restored and views of these modifications would be limited by intervening vegetation, topography, and structures (i.e., the clubhouse). Minor changes along the unnamed creek that is visible from U.S. 50, including a larger buffer between the creek and the golf turf, would occur. There would be no other changes to the golf course holes immediately adjacent to U.S. 50. The golf course holes that would be relocated to the west side of the river within Washoe Meadows SP would not be visible from U.S. 50 because of intervening neighborhoods, topography, and tall, dense vegetation.

Paving of the unpaved parking area would also cause a change in views from U.S. 50. There are currently 115 parking spaces in the paved parking lot at the golf course. The grassy areas on both sides of the golf course entrance are currently used for parking, and under Alternative 2, the north unpaved area would be paved to create an additional 89 parking spaces. Changes in long-term views associated with paving of the unpaved parking area would be less than significant, because the change in appearance of the parking area would be on the ground plane and would not substantially alter the overall landscape view. Also, there is no change in the visible activity (current parking use would continue) and no substantial increase in the anticipated parking use under this alternative. Although the grassy area would change from grass to pavement, the change in views would not be intrusive, being at the ground level. In addition, no changes to the clubhouse, driving range, or maintenance buildings, which are prominent features visible from U.S. 50, are proposed. Therefore, implementing Alternative 2 would not result in substantial changes in long-term views from U.S. 50.

Existing views of the golf course from the eastern portion of the study area include mowed greens, golf course holes, sand traps, and small bridges that cross the river in several locations. Golf course greens extend to the river's edge in most areas, and in numerous areas along this reach of the river, the riverbank is unvegetated with exposed dirt and rock. Under Alternative 2, views adjacent to the river would change from golf course greens to a native landscape, including riparian, floodplain, and wetland habitats. These changes in views would primarily be visible to golfers from within the existing golf course; however, there may also be distant views from the adjacent neighborhoods surrounding the golf course. Views of natural landscapes are considered desirable, and this change

in views is not considered adverse. Therefore, changes in views of the eastern portion of the study area would not substantially degrade views from any scenic vistas or any sensitive viewpoints (i.e., surrounding neighborhoods).

Because there would be no substantial changes to the long-term views from U.S. 50 or the eastern portion of the study area, this impact would be less than significant.

Western Area – Washoe Meadows SP

The most substantial changes in views under Alternative 2 would occur within Washoe Meadows SP in the western portion of the study area. Within the western portion of the study area, existing views from around and within the study area are primarily of forest, with stands of lodgepole and Jeffrey pine trees, and some visually degraded areas (i.e., former quarries). Current forest management practices within this area include reducing fuels in the urban interface, often removing 50% of trees or more in some areas with the long term goal of maintaining an open canopy and low-density forest. These management actions open the viewscape adjacent to residences.

Under Alternative 2, approximately 1,640 trees would be removed, changing the views from points within the park unit from forested to more open views of golf course tees, fairways, greens, bunkers, cart paths, and a restroom near hole 9. Interspersed existing trees would be retained. The golf course layout was designed to minimize tree loss by placement in relatively open and previously disturbed areas. All trees would be removed from areas designated as tees, greens, and fairways and approximately 80% would be removed from areas designated as rough. However, it is anticipated that the layout for the relocated holes would result in removal of three trees greater than 30 inches dbh. Introduction of golf course holes to this area would further change the views from more natural landscape and disturbed areas of bare ground to golf course greens. The restroom facility would be small, designed with natural colors to blend in with the surrounding landscape, and blocked from view with strategically placed vegetative cover. During times of the year when the surrounding natural vegetation is green, the views of golf course greens would be less noticeable; however, views of the golf course may be more pronounced during times of the year when the surrounding natural vegetation naturally dries and turns brown and the golf course remains green.

A forested buffer between 200 and 400 feet wide would remain intact between all existing houses and the relocated golf course holes that would partially or completely obscure views of the golf course; however, partial views of the relocated golf course holes may exist through the forested buffers in areas where existing trees are less dense or where existing open areas in the forest are located. Residences that may experience a change in views are located in the North Upper Truckee neighborhood, primarily on Chilicothe Street, Normuk Street, and Delaware Street. Existing views from these locations are shown in Exhibits 3.7-24 through 3.7-27 and 3.7-29.

In addition, under Alternative 2, there would be a substantial change in views from existing trails within Washoe Meadows SP. Although these trails are not officially established or designated trails, they are used regularly by resident and visiting recreationists. These trails provide views of the existing golf course and views of forest, the Upper Truckee River, and other habitats within Washoe Meadows SP (Exhibits 3.7-9 through 3.7-16). These views would also change from dense forest to more open views and golf course tees, fairways, greens, bunkers, and cart paths in some areas.

Both viewer groups (i.e., residents on their properties and trail users) would be affected by this change in landscape appearance, although the effect would vary in degree depending on the viewer location and sensitivity. Determination of visual quality is subjective and may differ from one individual to another. Some viewers may consider views of forested areas to be of higher value than views of golf course greens, while others may consider views of golf course greens to have a higher value. For purposes of environmental analysis under CEQA, NEPA, and TRPA requirements, the natural landscape possesses the scenic values that warrant protection.

Preserving the visual quality of the landscape is a key design goal for the relocated golf course. Although there would be substantial tree removal, the golf course layout was designed to minimize this effect by maximizing placement in existing, relatively open and previously disturbed areas that would have the least effect on the

landscape. This portion of the golf course would also be designed so that maintained turf areas are surrounded by native vegetation to maintain a natural-looking landscape to the extent possible. The intent is to create a course that blends well with existing terrain and natural vegetation. In addition, grading would be minimized; the natural contour would be used to the extent possible.

Although visual quality is a key design goal for the golf course, this alternative would require substantial grading to modify the terrain for the golf holes, substantial removal of existing trees, and construction of golf facilities in the existing forest. This would result in a substantial change in views from existing trails, and potentially from limited vantage points in adjacent neighborhoods (where the intervening forest buffer is not sufficiently dense to block views). This impact would be significant.

Mitigation Measure 3.7-2 (Alt. 2): Prepare and Implement a Landscaping and Forest Management Plan.

To address the degradation of visual quality resulting from tree removal and construction of the golf course in Washoe Meadows SP, State Parks will prepare and implement a landscaping and forest management plan to maximize visual screening of the golf course, while balancing vegetation management with other resource objectives, including habitat quality and fire fuel management. State Parks will plant native vegetation that contributes to visual screening around the perimeter of the golf course footprint consistent with the surrounding natural landscape. Plantings will be undertaken between May 1 and October 15 and will include regular watering in the growing season of the first three years to ensure adequate initial growth. The plantings will provide screening to mitigate the increased visibility of the golf course from surrounding neighborhoods and trails.

The plan will include information on species used for plantings, implementation approach and timing, irrigation, monitoring, and adaptive management. The plan will also require that trees be removed in a staggered pattern to the extent feasible to maximize the visual screening by the remaining trees. The buffer landscape will also be managed to maintain a minimum depth of 200 feet between residential properties and the golf course. The forest vegetation in the buffer will be managed to maintain an effective visual screen, appropriate fire fuel control, and wildlife habitat qualities. The plan will be prepared in conjunction with detailed golf course design so that precise areas of disturbance are known and the landscaping and forest management process can be coordinated with golf course construction.

Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce impacts associated with the long-term degradation of the visual character, existing visual quality, or scenic quality affecting residences adjacent to Washoe Meadows SP to a less-than-significant level because preparation and implementation of a landscaping and forest management plan would provide effective visual screening of the golf course.

IMPACT 3.7-3 (Alt. 2) **Potential for Increases in Light or Glare.** *Under Alternative 2, permanent lighting would be added to the unpaved parking area adjacent to the clubhouse. However, the existing parking area and clubhouse are currently sources of light and glare, and this increase in lighting is expected to be minimal. In addition, Alternative 2 would not include construction during nighttime hours; therefore, no lighting would be used during construction. This impact would be **less than significant**.*

Construction would not take place at night and would not require construction site lighting. Consequently, there would be no significant light or glare effects during project construction.

Under Alternative 2, additional lightning would be installed at the newly paved parking area adjacent to the golf course entrance. The golf course parking area lighting is currently used to light the parking areas for clubhouse events that may occur in the evening and end by 10 p.m. Lighting is not used to light the golf course, which is closed at dusk. Lighting use would continue to be for the purpose of lighting the parking area for specific events, ending at 10 p.m.

According to the TRPA Design Review Guidelines lighting standards, lighting shall be directed downward, and lighting fixtures shall not exceed 10–12 feet in height (TRPA 1989a:30-5 and 30-6). All new lighting would comply with TRPA’s Design Review Guidelines. In addition, the restroom facilities would be constructed of nonreflective materials and would not include any exterior lighting. Because the new lighting would be near the existing parking area and clubhouse, which are existing sources of light and glare, and because the proposed lighting would be minimal and would be consistent with TRPA’s lighting design guidelines, Alternative 2 would not create substantial light and glare effects in the long term. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

Alternative 3: River Ecosystem Restoration with Reduced Play Golf Course

IMPACT 3.7-1 (Alt. 3) Potential for Short-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B. *Construction activities and staging areas within the study area would be visible from U.S. 50, the existing golf course, and trails within Washoe Meadows SP. Construction activities may also be partially visible from the adjacent neighborhoods, and construction vehicles and equipment would travel on U.S. 50, which is designated as a scenic highway. Because construction-related scenic effects would be temporary and limited to the visibility of typical construction vehicles and ground-level activities, this impact would be less than significant.*

Implementation of Alternative 3 would include construction activities associated with removing golf course holes adjacent to the river and bridges. A reduced play golf course, such as an executive or 9-hole regulation course, would be constructed on the east side of the river and would be designed to minimize the golf footprint within the SEZ. All bridges would be removed from the Upper Truckee River, and four bridges would be removed from Angora Creek and restoration activities would occur along the Upper Truckee River and floodplain. Alternative 3 would not include construction associated with paving the grassy area at the golf course entrance or relocating golf course holes to the west side of the river. Construction would take place between May 1 and October 15 (possibly November 1 if weather allows and an extension is granted) of each year for a 3- to 4-year period. During these construction windows, heavy equipment and associated vehicles, construction workers, staging areas, and construction activities would be visible or partially visible from U.S. 50, across U.S. 50, the existing golf course, and adjacent neighborhoods.

In addition, large construction vehicles and equipment would use U.S. 50 as a travel route to and from the study area, which could degrade views along the highway. Although construction of this alternative would cause some changes in views for travelers on U.S. 50 and from the surrounding area, these changes would be temporary and minor.

Views of construction would not be visible from neighborhoods west and south of Washoe Meadows SP under this alternative, and views of construction from trails within Washoe Meadows SP would be limited. However, some construction vehicles would be visible accessing the area from Chilcothe Street. Views from adjacent neighbors south of the golf course would be affected by construction-related activities. All viewer groups would be affected by this change in visual quality, although the effect would vary in degree depending on the viewer location and sensitivity. Although construction of Alternative 3 would cause some changes in views, these changes would be temporary and minor and would be less than under Alternative 2. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-2 (Alt. 3) Potential for Long-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B. *There could be some long-term changes in views of the golf course and parking area from U.S. 50 and neighborhoods surrounding the golf course. However, these long-term changes in views would be minor and are not considered adverse. In addition, there would be no changes in views for nearby residents south and west of Washoe Meadows SP. Because there would be no substantial changes to the long-term views, this impact would be less than significant.*

Under Alternative 3, several golf course holes adjacent to the river would be removed, and the area previously occupied by golf course would be restored. However, under Alternative 3, no golf course holes would be relocated to the west side of the river within Washoe Meadows SP, no trees within Washoe Meadows SP would be removed for the relocated golf course, and the grassy area at the golf course entrance would not be paved. Therefore, this alternative would primarily result in minor long-term changes in views to the eastern portion of the study area.

Eastern Area – Lake Valley SRA

Under Alternative 3, there could be long-term changes in views of the golf course from U.S. 50. Several golf course holes currently located along the river would be removed, and the area adjacent to the river would be restored. All the bridges across the river and Angora Creek would also be removed. Brief views of this area from U.S. 50 would change from golf course greens to native landscape. These changes in views would be minimal, primarily in the northern portion of the golf course, and are not considered adverse (because the outcome would be a restored natural landscape). In addition, views of these changes would be limited because of intervening vegetation, topography, and structures (i.e., the clubhouse).

The grassy area at the golf course entrance would not be paved under this alternative, and there would be no changes to the clubhouse, driving range, or maintenance buildings, which are prominent features visible from U.S. 50. Within the eastern portion of the study area, the primary changes in visual character would be from golf course greens adjacent to the river to native landscapes and from removal of the existing golf course bridges, similar to Alternative 2. This change in views is not considered adverse and would primarily be visible to golfers from within the existing golf course; however, there may also be distant views from adjacent neighborhoods surrounding the golf course. Changes in views of the eastern portion of the study area would not substantially degrade views from any scenic vistas or any sensitive viewpoints (i.e., surrounding neighborhoods).

Because there would be no substantial changes to the long-term views from U.S. 50 or the eastern portion of the study area, this impact would be less than significant.

Western Area – Washoe SP

Under Alternative 3, no golf course holes would be relocated to the west side of the river, and as a result, there would be no changes to the visual character of Washoe Meadows SP. The substantial tree removal that would occur under Alternative 2 for the relocated golf course would not occur under Alternative 3.

Residences in the North Upper Truckee neighborhood to the south and west would not experience a change in long-term views under Alternative 3. However, existing views of the golf course adjacent to the river from trails within Washoe Meadows SP would change slightly. These views would change from golf course greens to native landscape. This change in views is not considered adverse.

Because implementing Alternative 3 would result in only minor changes in long-term views in the study area and those changes are not considered adverse, this impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-3 (Alt. 3) Potential for Increases in Light or Glare. *Alternative 3 would not include construction during nighttime hours; therefore, no lighting would be used during construction. In addition, no new long-term sources of light or glare are proposed under Alternative 3. No impact would occur.*

Alternative 3 would have no effect on light and glare. No new facilities with lighting are proposed. Because Alternative 3 does not propose a restroom, a lighted parking area, or facilities within Washoe Meadows SP, there would be no increases in glare associated with Alternative 3. Furthermore, no lighting would be necessary for construction purposes because construction would not take place at night. Therefore, this alternative would not introduce any new sources of short-term or long-term light or glare. No impact would occur.

No mitigation is required.

Alternative 4: River Stabilization with Existing 18-Hole Regulation Golf Course

IMPACT 3.7-1 (Alt. 4) Potential for Short-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B. *Construction activities and staging areas within the study area may be visible from U.S. 50, the existing golf course, trails within Washoe Meadows SP, and neighborhoods adjacent to the golf course over a period of approximately 2–3 years. Furthermore, construction vehicles and equipment would travel on U.S. 50, which is designated as a scenic highway. However, construction activities would be temporary and minor. This impact would be less than significant.*

This impact would be similar to Impact 3.7-1 (Alt. 2) because there would be construction activities associated with river stabilization and paving of the unpaved parking area, and construction vehicles would travel on U.S. 50. Staging areas would be visible from U.S. 50 and across U.S. 50 during construction, and additional staging areas for construction would be visible from the eastern and western portions of the study area. However, this alternative would require less construction than Alternative 2 because no golf course holes would be relocated to the west side of the river and the construction window would be approximately 1 year shorter than under Alternative 2. The short-term changes in views would be temporary and minor, and construction activities would be intermittent and would occur only during the designated work periods. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-2 (Alt. 4) Potential for Long-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B. *Alternative 4 would include stabilization of the river and paving of the unpaved parking area at the golf course entrance, which would be visible following construction. However, these long-term changes in views would be minor and are not considered adverse. In addition, nearby residents south and west of Washoe Meadows SP would not experience changes in long-term views. Because there would be no substantial changes to the long-term views from U.S. 50 or the surrounding area, this impact would be less than significant.*

This impact would be similar to Impact 3.7-2 (Alt. 3) because the only long-term change in views would be from U.S. 50 and within the eastern portion of the study area. Under Alternative 4, long-term changes in views would involve paving of the unpaved parking area north of the golf course entrance, construction of a restroom facility, and stabilization of the river. The segment of river flowing through the golf course would be stabilized; however, this would not be visible from U.S. 50 because of intervening topography, distance, and structures. In addition, there would be no changes to the clubhouse or maintenance facilities under this alternative. As described under Alternative 3, paving of the unpaved parking area would result in changes only to ground-level views and would not be intrusive.

Long-term changes in views within the eastern portion of the study area associated with stabilization of the river involve both rock armor and biotechnical streambank protection. Alternative 4 would involve placement of additional rock material along the banks compared to Alternative 2 and existing conditions, the use of biotechnical materials would allow for materials on banks to blend into the surroundings. The golf course greens would continue to be located adjacent to the riverbanks. The restroom facility would be visible from the eastern portion of the study area; however, this facility would be small, designed with natural colors to blend in with the surrounding landscape, and blocked from view with strategically placed vegetative cover.

In addition, there would be no change in long-term views of the western portion of the study area. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-3 (Alt. 4) **Potential for Increases in Light or Glare.** *Under Alternative 4, permanent lighting would be added to the parking area adjacent to the clubhouse. However, the existing parking area and clubhouse are currently sources of light and glare, and this increase in lighting is expected to be minimal. In addition, Alternative 4 would not include construction during nighttime hours; therefore, no lighting would be used during construction. This impact would be **less than significant**.*

This impact is similar to Impact 3.7-3 (Alt. 2) because this alternative would not introduce any new sources of short-term light or glare but would introduce new lighting to the newly paved parking area adjacent to the golf course entrance. This lighting would comply with TRPA's Design Review Guidelines for lighting. In addition, the restroom facility proposed near holes 5 and 6 would be constructed of nonreflective materials and would not increase glare in the study area. No exterior lighting is proposed for the restroom facility. Therefore, this impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

Alternative 5: River Ecosystem Restoration with Decommissioned Golf Course

IMPACT 3.7-1 (Alt. 5) **Potential for Short-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B.** *Construction activities and staging areas within the study area may be visible from U.S. 50, trails within Washoe Meadows SP, and adjacent neighborhoods. Construction vehicles and equipment would also travel on U.S. 50, which is designated as a scenic highway. Because construction-related effects would be minor and temporary, this impact would be **less than significant**.*

Alternative 5 would include construction activities associated with decommissioning the 18-hole golf course and restoring the river in a manner similar to that proposed for Alternatives 2 and 3. Under Alternative 5, the existing golf course would be restored to native landscape. If economically feasible, a temporary nine-hole golf course may remain in place while State Parks evaluates alternative uses of this meadow area; therefore, a phased construction approach may occur. Construction activities under Alternative 5 would be similar to those under Alternatives 2 and 3 on the eastern side and, compared to Alternative 4, would be more visible from U.S. 50, adjacent neighborhoods and trails within Washoe Meadows SP because construction activities would occur throughout the golf course. Two staging areas would also be visible from U.S. 50 during construction, and additional staging areas would be visible from the eastern and western portions of the study area. In addition, large construction vehicles and equipment would use U.S. 50 as a travel route to and from the study area, which could degrade views along the highway. Views of construction would not be visible to neighborhoods west and south of Washoe Meadows SP, as under Alternative 2. However, some trucks would access the study area using Chilicothe Street. There would be views of construction from trails within Washoe Meadows SP. No construction activities would be associated with the clubhouse, parking area, or maintenance buildings under this alternative.

Although construction of this alternative could cause some changes in short-term views for travelers on U.S. 50 and the surrounding area, these changes would be temporary and minor. Thus, construction activities associated with Alternative 5 would not substantially degrade views from U.S. 50 or the surrounding area. This impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-2 (Alt. 5) **Potential for Long-Term Degradation of the Existing Visual Character, Existing Visual Quality, or Scenic Quality of Roadway Travel Unit 36B.** *Alternative 5 would include decommissioning of the existing golf course, restoration of the river, and removal of golf course bridges that would be visible following construction. These long-term changes in views would be visible from U.S. 50 and the adjacent neighborhoods. Although long-term changes in views would change, these changes are not considered adverse. Therefore, this impact would be **less than significant**.*

Under Alternative 5, no golf course holes would be relocated to the west side of the river within Washoe Meadows SP, no trees within Washoe Meadows SP would be removed for the relocated golf course, and the grassy area north of the golf course entrance would not be paved. Therefore, this alternative would primarily result in long-term changes in views to the eastern portion of the study area.

Eastern Area – Lake Valley SRA

Under Alternative 5, there would be long-term changes in views of the golf course from U.S. 50. The 18-hole regulation golf course would be decommissioned, and the river would be restored in a manner similar to that proposed for Alternatives 2 and 3. The area occupied by the existing golf course would be restored to native landscape, and all of the existing bridges across the Upper Truckee River, Angora Creek, and the unnamed creek would be removed. Although there would be substantial changes in views associated with the golf course compared with views under other alternatives, a change in existing views to views of natural landscape is not considered adverse. In addition, the unpaved parking area north of the golf course entrance would not be paved under this alternative, and there would be no changes to the clubhouse, existing parking area, or maintenance buildings, which are prominent features visible from U.S. 50. Long-term changes in views from U.S. 50 are not considered adverse.

In addition, views of the golf course from adjacent residences and from trails within Washoe Meadows SP would change from golf course tees, fairways, bunkers, greens, and cart paths to views of restored meadow and riparian habitat. These modifications would result in substantial change in views; however, increasing the natural landscape would be consistent with the surrounding landscape and these changes are not considered adverse and would be less than significant.

Western Area – Washoe Meadows SP

No golf course holes would be relocated to the west side of the river as part of Alternative 5, and as a result, there would be no changes to the visual character of Washoe Meadows SP from surrounding areas or within Washoe Meadows SP. The only tree removal that would occur under Alternative 5 would be associated with ongoing forest management within Washoe Meadows SP and minor tree removal to access construction areas adjacent to the river. The substantial tree removal that would occur under Alternative 2 for the relocated golf course would not occur under Alternative 5.

Residences in the North Upper Truckee neighborhood to the south and west would not experience a change in views under Alternative 5. However, existing views of the golf course from trails within Washoe Meadows SP would change. These views would change from golf course tees, fairways, bunkers, greens, and cart paths to natural meadow and riparian habitats, consistent with the natural landscape of Washoe Meadows SP and the surrounding area. Although implementing Alternative 5 would result in changes to views in the study area, these

changes would be consistent with the surrounding landscape and are not considered adverse. This impact would be less than significant.

No mitigation is required.

IMPACT 3.7-3 (Alt. 5) **Potential for Increases in Light or Glare.** *Alternative 5 would not include construction during nighttime hours; therefore, no lighting would be used during construction. In addition, no new long-term sources of light or glare are proposed under Alternative 5. **No impact** would occur.*

This impact is similar to Impact 3.7-3 (Alt. 3) because this alternative would not introduce any new sources of short-term or long-term light or glare. Alternative 5 would not include facilities within Washoe Meadows SP; therefore, there would be no increases in glare associated with new facilities. No impact would occur.

No mitigation is required.