

NOTICE OF PREPARATION and ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCOPING MEETINGS

Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project Environmental Impact Report

Release Date: June 22, 2018

To: California and Nevada State Clearinghouses, California Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Other Public Agencies, and Interested Individuals and Organizations

Subject: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project

Lead Agency: Tahoe City Public Utility District
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Consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements, the Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD) is the lead agency under CEQA for the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) for the Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project. TCPUD prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines.

This NOP is intended to inform responsible, trustee, and other affected or interested agencies and the public that an EIR will be prepared to address potential impacts resulting from implementation of the Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project. Agencies should comment on the elements of potential environmental effects that are relevant to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the implementation of the proposed project.

PROJECT LOCATION

The Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project is located along the northwest shore of Lake Tahoe within the community of Tahoe City in Placer County (see Exhibit 1). The existing lodge is located at 925 Country Club Drive in the Highlands Community. The proposed project involves replacing, expanding, and relocating the lodge to a site off Polaris Road adjacent to the North Tahoe Middle/High School. Exhibit 2 shows the location of the existing lodge (Site A), the proposed relocation site (Site D), and the approximate footprint (area of ground disturbance) of alternatives that will be evaluated in the EIR.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The existing Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge, which also serves as the Highlands Park and Community Center, is owned by TCPUD and operated by the project applicant and concessionaire, the Tahoe Cross-Country Ski Education Association (TCCSEA), under a Concession Agreement with TCPUD. The proposed project would relocate and reconstruct the Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge and would address existing operational deficiencies relative to circulation and parking, storage, staff facilities, and community space; better accommodate existing recreation demand; and improve the quality of the recreation user experience at the lodge. Reconstruction of the lodge would consolidate the existing accessory buildings into a single facility and would provide more amenities to serve guests and employees. In addition, the types of activities at the lodge could be expanded to better serve additional recreational opportunities and community needs. Reconstruction of the lodge would adaptively reuse elements of the historic Schilling Lodge, constructed as a private residence on Lake Tahoe's west shore in 1936, and would eliminate or minimize spillover parking on residential streets. No changes are proposed to the existing Highlands Park trail system or adjacent trails on state property.

TCPUD has primary authority for project review and approval as the lead agency under CEQA. Additional approvals will be needed from Placer County and the California Tahoe Conservancy (Conservancy), and the project would also be required to obtain approval from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) through a subsequent permit application process. The proposed increase in the size of the recreation building is sufficient to require TRPA Governing Board approval of the project. The Conservancy would need to provide property rights approval (such as a special use permit, easement, license, lease, or land exchange) for the proposed project and any alternative involving Site D.

TCPUD's project objectives are to:

- Expand recreational opportunities through construction of a new lodge at the Highlands Park to improve resident and visitor experience.
- Construct a new lodge that minimizes effects on the neighborhood.
- Maintain a concessionaire partnership to operate improved and viable recreation opportunities.
- Preserve financial accountability and transparency of TCPUD property tax funds, while maximizing the use of private funding for construction of the new lodge.
- Create inviting community areas and public-use spaces.
- Support the North Lake Tahoe Tourism Plan by:
 - Capitalizing infrastructure improvements on public lands and recreational assets.
 - Achieving a Tier 1 Action Priority by providing connected trails systems for mountain biking, hiking, and Nordic skiing.

TCCSEA's project objectives are to:

- Address operational deficiencies in the current facility and improve financial viability.
- Repurpose the historic Schilling Lodge into a new lodge for community use and recreation activities.
- Maximize the base elevation of the lodge site.
- Improve and maintain educational programs and activities offered to adults and youth and create more user-friendly access to the trail system for beginner, disabled, and senior recreationists.

TCPUD and TCCSEA share project objectives to:

- Remedy inadequate parking and improve access to the lodge and trail system.
- Provide high quality and professionally-maintained recreational amenities and facilitate growth and diversity of recreational opportunities by enhancing summer and winter activities.

At the March 16, 2018 meeting, the TCPUD Board of Directors passed a motion directing staff to evaluate the proposed project, four action alternatives, and a no project alternative in the EIR. The proposed project and action alternatives are located at two sites—Site D is located on Polaris Road adjacent to North Tahoe High School at an elevation of 6,636 feet above mean sea level (msl), and Site A is the location of the existing lodge on Country Club Drive at 6,560 feet above msl. Both sites are in the North Tahoe High School Subdistrict and zoned for recreation in the Placer County Tahoe Basin Area Plan (Area Plan); the sites also have a land use designation of recreation in the Area Plan and the TRPA Regional Plan. Site D distances the lodge from adjacent residents, provides a shared-parking opportunity with the North Tahoe Middle/High School consistent with Policy T-P-13 of the Area Plan, and provides favorable trail access. Under the proposed project and alternatives at Site D, the lodge at the existing site would either be demolished and the site would be restored to its natural condition, or the existing lodge and site would be retained in its current condition to be used in a manner consistent with TCPUD’s mission. Site A is situated on an existing developed site and minimizes new disturbance. The proposed project and all four action alternatives propose to adaptively reuse the historic Schilling Lodge in the reconstruction of a new lodge facility. Renderings of the outside of the proposed reconstructed lodge are shown in Exhibit 3. Each alternative to be evaluated in the EIR is summarized below.

- Site D – Full Project (Proposed Project). The proposed project includes a 10,154 square foot (sq. ft.) reconstructed lodge that adaptively reuses the Schilling Lodge with an addition and basement. Uses of the building would include ticket sales, retail, meeting room, café, rental, storage, staff area, first aid, lockers, family area, gym/meeting space, snowmobile carport, and community/outdoor space. One hundred vehicle parking spaces and two bus parking spaces are included in the 59,799 sq. ft. parking and driveway area. Access to the site would be from a new driveway on Polaris Road.
- Site A – Full Project. This alternative includes a reconstructed lodge of the same size as the proposed project, and would accommodate the same uses as the proposed project. One hundred vehicle parking spaces and two bus parking spaces are included in the 49,466 sq. ft. parking and driveway area. Access to the site would be provided from Country Club Drive. Under this alternative, the existing lodge would be demolished.
- Site A – Modified Project. This alternative would be in the same location as Site A – Full Project but would include a different site configuration with two buildings—the Schilling Lodge with a basement addition (totaling 6,229 sq. ft.) and a renovated existing clubhouse (2,432 sq. ft.). The total building area would be about 1,500 sq. ft. smaller than the proposed project and Site A – Full Project Alternative. This alternative would include the same access, uses, and number of bus and vehicle parking spaces as the Site A – Full Project Alternative; however, due to its configuration, it would involve a slightly larger footprint for the parking and driveway area.
- Site D – Reduced Project. This alternative is within the same footprint as the proposed project, but there would be no addition to the Schilling Lodge other than a basement. The total building area would be 6,229 sq. ft. Uses of the lodge would include ticket sales, retail, meeting room, café, rental, storage, and community/outdoor space. This alternative includes 65 vehicle parking and two bus parking spaces in a 53,184 sq. ft. driveway and parking area. Access to the site would be provided by the same new driveway as the proposed project.
- Site D – Alternative Driveway. This alternative is proposed in a similar location as the proposed project and the Site D – Reduced Project Alternative, but with a new access driveway connecting to

Cedarwood Drive rather than Polaris Road. With this alternative, the new driveway would cross through the Highlands Subdistrict, which is zoned and designated residential. The driveway for this alternative would be longer than the proposed project driveway and would require a bridge across a seasonal drainage. This alternative proposes the same structure, uses, and parking as the proposed project.

- **No Project Alternative.** This alternative would involve the existing lodge continuing to function in its current capacity. Under this alternative, as under existing conditions, TCPUD would implement improvements or maintenance activities for the existing Highlands Community Center building and address the parking deficiencies at the existing site. Such improvements or maintenance would be required to address issues with the aging facility and improving on-site parking capacity to reduce spillover onto residential streets. As part of the improvements and maintenance, the No Project Alternative could involve remodeling the interior, making changes to the façade, and revisiting circulation and restriping parking.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

TCPUD has identified the types of environmental impacts that may result from implementation of the Tahoe Cross-Country Lodge Replacement and Expansion Project. The potential environmental effects of the project that will be addressed in the EIR include impacts on the following resource areas:

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|---|--|
| ■ Aesthetics | ■ Agriculture and forestry resources |
| ■ Air quality | ■ Biological resources |
| ■ Cultural resources | ■ Geology, soils, land capability and coverage |
| ■ Greenhouse gas emissions | ■ Hazards and hazardous materials |
| ■ Hydrology and water quality | ■ Land use and planning |
| ■ Mineral resources | ■ Noise |
| ■ Population and housing | ■ Public services and utilities |
| ■ Recreation | ■ Transportation and traffic |
| ■ Archaeological, historical, and tribal cultural resources | |

SCOPING MEETINGS

Two EIR scoping meetings have been scheduled to provide additional information about the project and CEQA process. The meetings will provide interested parties with the opportunity to offer early input into the project, as well as to comment on the scope of environmental issues, potential environmental effects, and alternatives to be considered in the EIR. The scoping meetings will be held at the following times and locations:

July 17, 2018
Beginning at 10:00 a.m.
TCPUD Board Room
221 Fairway Drive
Tahoe City, CA 96145

July 17, 2018
Beginning at 6:00 p.m.
TCPUD Board Room
221 Fairway Drive
Tahoe City, CA 96145

RESPONSES TO THIS NOP

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, responses to the NOP must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than July 25, 2018. Please send your written responses, including the name of a contact person, to:

Tahoe City Public Utility District
PO Box 5249, Tahoe City, CA 96145
Contact: Kim Boyd, Senior Management Analyst
Phone: (530) 580-6286
kboyd@tcpud.org

INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

TCPUD will use the EIR to consider environmental effects of the proposed project, provide mitigation measures to reduce potential significant impacts resulting from implementation of the project, and evaluate alternatives. TCPUD will use the EIR to comply with CEQA and make an informed environmental decision regarding project approval. It will also serve as a project EIR that may be referenced in the permitting of later activities implementing the project.

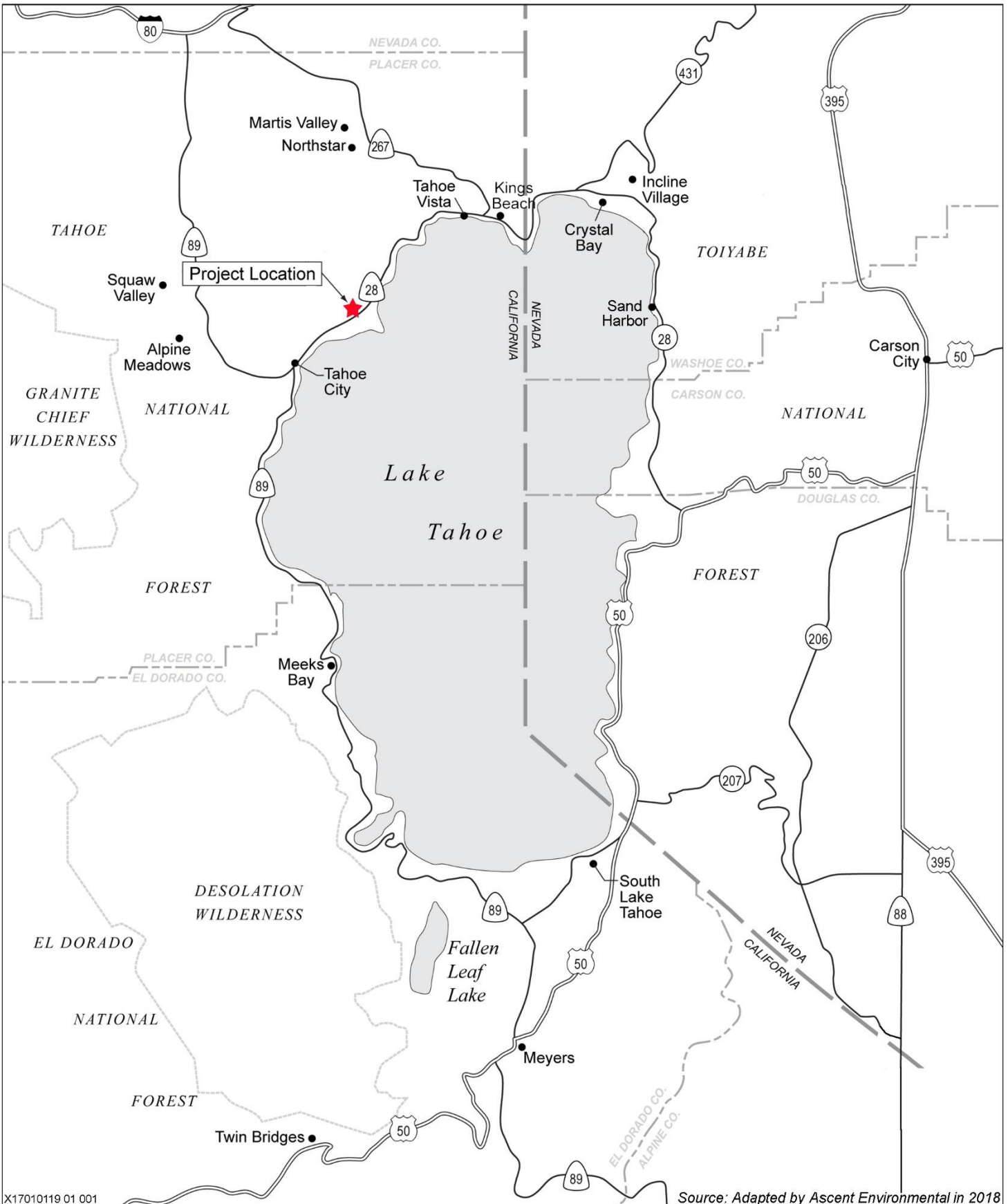


Exhibit 1

Regional Location



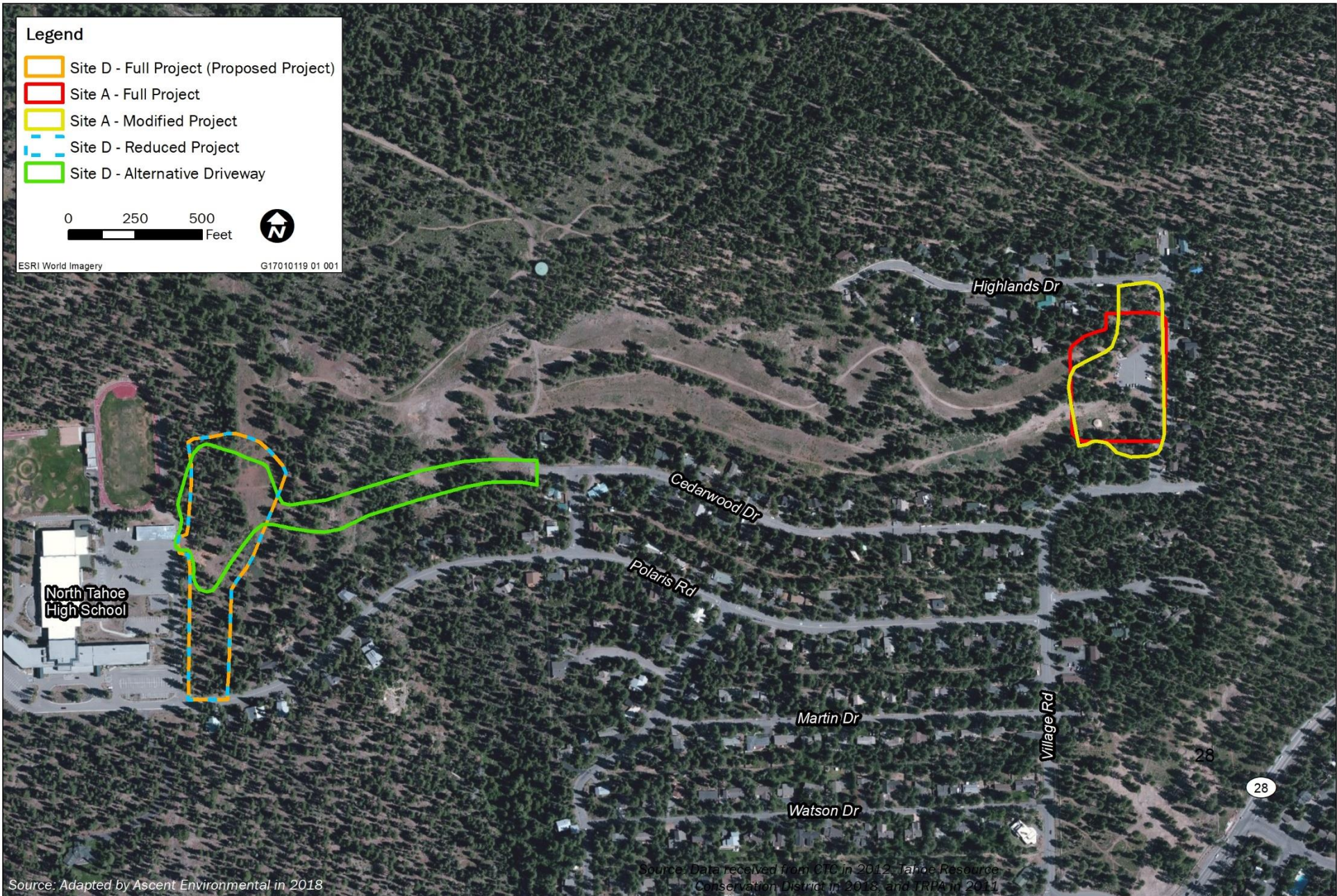
Legend

- Site D - Full Project (Proposed Project)
- Site A - Full Project
- Site A - Modified Project
- Site D - Reduced Project
- Site D - Alternative Driveway



ESRI World Imagery

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Source: Adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2018

Source: Data received from CTC in 2012, Tahoe Resource Conservation District in 2018, and TRPA in 2011



Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area—Site A - full project, Site D - full project, and Site D - alternative driveway.



Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area—Back for Site A - full project, Site D - full project, and Site D - alternative driveway.

Source: Olson-Olson Architects, LLP 2018

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