

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

NEPA (40 CFR 1502.16) and the TRPA Code of Ordinances (Section 3.7.2.F) require a discussion of the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity of the environment. The following discussion addresses how the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project would affect the short-term use and the long-term productivity of the environment. In general, “short-term” is used here to refer to the construction period, while “long-term” refers to the operational life of the project and beyond.

Implementation of the build alternatives would result in short-term construction-related impacts within the study area (construction impacts are described in detail in the individual resource sections in Chapter 3, “Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures”). Potential short-term impacts include ground disturbance and vegetation removal for construction access and safety of operations, temporary limitations to vehicle and recreation access in some areas, increased air emissions, potential disturbance of currently unrecorded cultural resources, transport and use of hazardous materials (e.g., fuels and lubricants), soil erosion and water quality impacts, and increased ambient noise levels. Short-term impacts would be minimized through implementation of mitigation measures intended to reduce environmental effects. Over the long term, these resources are expected to recover from any adverse effects without a loss in productivity.

In the long term, the build alternatives would result in increased coverage (see Section 3.11, “Geology, Soils, Land Capability, and Coverage”); tree removal and disturbance and loss of sensitive habitats (see Section 3.16, “Biological Environment”); increases in ambient noise levels and visual impacts on neighborhood character in the Rocky Point residential area west of the Heavenly Village Center (see Sections 3.15, “Noise and Vibration,” and 3.7, “Visual Resources/Aesthetics”); and the division of the Rocky Point neighborhood and displacement of residences. These impacts would be minimized through implementation of mitigation measures intended to reduce environmental effects.

Implementation of the US 50/South Shore Community Revitalization Project would meet the need to address existing and future transportation deficiencies and projected multi-modal transportation needs along the US 50 corridor between Pioneer Trail and SR 207, to alleviate cut-through traffic in local neighborhoods in the City of South Lake Tahoe, and to support community revitalization goals in the California/Nevada state line area. The project would also meet the demand for transportation improvements to create well-designed, safer facilities that balance the needs of pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and private vehicle access while respecting the unique environmental setting of the Lake Tahoe Basin. The project would help the South Shore area to achieve revitalization goals, such as creating more walkable, transit-served public space in the tourist core through public and private investment, which would promote economic vitality.

Redevelopment of the mixed-use sites provides an opportunity for replacement of the displaced residents and business in the same immediate area. Depending on the composition of the mixed-use developments, these sites could include primarily affordable housing and provide a unique opportunity to meaningfully address the existing workforce housing deficiency in the Tahoe Basin.

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