COUNTY OF Placer
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE AGENCY

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/RESOURCE AGENCY
Environmental Coordination Services
County of Placer

DATE: July 9, 2021

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

SUBJECT: Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed Truckee River Recreational Access Plan Project

REVIEW PERIOD: July 9, 2021 to August 9, 2021

Placer County is the lead agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed draft Truckee River Recreational Access Plan (TRRAP) project (proposed project) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), State CEQA Guidelines Section 15082. The purpose of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to provide responsible agencies and interested persons with sufficient information to enable them to make meaningful comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR. Your timely comments will ensure an appropriate level of environmental review for the project.

Project Description: The proposed TRRAP would provide public accessibility, connectivity, educational, and recreational opportunities, as well as identify opportunities to restore watershed and habitat ecosystems within the TRRAP plan area.

Project Location: The TRRAP plan area is located within the County of Placer, 114 miles east of Sacramento, and approximately 48 miles southwest of Reno, Nevada to the northwest shore of Lake Tahoe. The TRRAP area follows the Truckee River corridor from the intersection of Squaw Valley Road and State Route (SR) 89 and extends downstream approximately 8 miles to West River Street near the intersection of SR 89 (Exhibit 1). The TRRAP corridor extends approximately one-eighth mile (660 feet) on either side of the Truckee River.

For more information regarding the project, please contact Kansas McGahan at (530) 581-6217 or Kansas.McGahan@placer.ca.gov. A copy of the NOP is available for review at the Placer County Community Development Resource Agency (Auburn), Placer County Department of Public Works (Tahoe), and on the Placer County website:

https://www.placer.ca.gov/7204/Truckee-River-Recreational-Access-Projec

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

EIR Scoping Meeting on the TRRAP Project
July 21, 2021 | 5:00 PM
Virtual Meeting (Online only – No physical location)
Zoom: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89421759185

Phone: 1+ (669) 900 9128 or 1+ (888) 788 0099 | Webinar ID: 894 2175 9185

NOP Comment Period: Written comments should be submitted at the earliest possible date, but not later than 5:00 p.m. on **August 9, 2021** to Shirlee Herrington, Environmental Coordination Services, Community Development Resource Agency, 3091 County Center Drive, Suite 190, Auburn, CA 95603. (530) 745-3132, Fax: (530) 745-3080, cdraecs@placer.ca.gov.

PROJECT LOCATION

The TRRAP plan area is located within the County of Placer, California, 114 miles east of Sacramento, California, and approximately 48 miles southwest of Reno, Nevada to the northwest shore of Lake Tahoe. The TRRAP area follows the Truckee River corridor from the intersection of Squaw Valley Road and State Route (SR) 89 and extends downstream approximately 8 miles to West River Street near the intersection of SR 89 (Exhibit 1). The TRRAP corridor extends approximately one-eighth mile (660 feet) on either side of the Truckee River.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed TRRAP would provide public accessibility, connectivity, educational, and recreational opportunities, as well as preserve open space land and habitat along a corridor of the Truckee River. In 2006, Placer County declared the Truckee River corridor a natural resource that serves many environmental, cultural, transportation, and recreational functions. The vision of the TRRAP is to restore and enhance the river corridor's ecological, water quality, recreational, and non-motorized transportation values for the benefit of residents and visitors, while minimizing impacts to private-property landowners in the corridor. The TRRAP will be evaluated and implemented in phases. Phase 1 is proposed to extend from West River Street to the intersection of Brush Creek and the Truckee River (Exhibit 2). Phase 2 is proposed to extend from Brush Creek to Squaw Valley Road. The EIR will evaluate Phase 1 at a project level and Phase 2 at a programmatic level, because implementation would be phased, and Phase 1 would be implemented prior to Phase 2.

The TRRAP includes the identification of restoration and habitat enhancement opportunities along the corridor. Restoring eroding or degraded areas to minimize sediment and pollutants from entering the Truckee River and improving habitat function are key elements of the TRRAP. The educational component of the TRRAP includes interpretive signage describing important historical, cultural, ecological, and other points of interest along the corridor. The TRRAP also includes a paved multi-use trail connection between the Town of Truckee, the three U.S. Forest Service (USFS) campgrounds (Granite Flat, Goose Meadows, and Silver Creek) within the Truckee River corridor along SR 89, to Squaw Valley Road. The paved trail would connect the Truckee River Legacy River Trail, located in the Town of Truckee, to the existing Truckee River multi-use trail that extends to Tahoe City from Squaw Valley. The approximately 8-mile non-motorized trail would allow for uses that could include walking, bicycling, and in-line skating. Winter access could allow for uses such as snow shoeing and skiing. Other winter uses are possible at a future time if snow removal efforts are warranted. The paved trail would connect new and existing opportunities for angling, kayak and other non-motorized boating access, parking, mountain biking, back-country trails, and public-use areas. Parking areas would be designed to be consistent with the Placer County Sustainability Plan and in accordance with applicable USFS and Caltrans design standards. The proposed multi-use trail would be almost entirely on National Forest System lands managed by the USFS or within the Caltrans right-of-way along SR 89. The multi-use trail would be designed at a variable width; it would be a minimum of 10-feet wide with variable shoulders, and may include up to six new bridges over the Truckee River and other streams/drainages in the TRRAP corridor. The proposed trail alignment and alternative alignments (Exhibit 2) were selected to maximize user enjoyment and to minimize private property and environmental impacts. The proposed alignment may be refined during design based on public input, findings from the environmental review, input from USFS or Caltrans, and/or engineering constraints. Exhibit 2 includes a conceptual alignment that was added for consideration based on homeowner feedback provided in the spring of 2021. This alignment would include a stretch of trail on the west side of SR 89 that could include two grade-separated crossings (such as tunnels) across SR 89. This alignment would increase the distance of the trail from private property and is being evaluated for technical feasibility.

Potential permitting agencies and the permits that may be required for the proposed project include the U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest (NEPA Compliance, Special Use Permit); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Clean Water Act Section 404 Fill and Dredge permit); California Department of Transportation (Encroachment and Rights of Way permits); Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control (Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification, General Construction Permit, Dewatering Permit); California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Section 1602 Stream Alteration Agreement); Placer County (CEQA Compliance, Construction Permits, applicable discretionary permits); and Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency (approval to work near sewer line).

TRRAP OBJECTIVES

Objectives of the TRRAP include the following:

- Coordinate the multiple jurisdictional authorities in the Truckee River corridor through a managed strategy to address access to public land, habitat conservation and restoration, and water quality.

- Identify a recreational and alternative multi-use transportation route from Squaw Valley Road to the Town of Truckee.
- Identify restoration projects that will improve wildlife and aquatic habitat, restore a contiguous riparian plant community along the river, and enhance water quality.
- Identify improvements for angling and kayaking/non-motorized boating that direct public access away from private properties.
- Identify local and regional connections to multi-use trails, public campgrounds, and recreation access points that direct public access away from private property.
- Provide interpretive signage describing important historical, cultural, and ecological aspects of the corridor.
- Identify parking and/or trailhead opportunities along SR 89 to allow for recreational access to the Truckee River.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The following subject areas include potential environmental effects that will be analyzed in the EIR.

Aesthetics. Construction elements of the TRRAP would result in changes to natural landscape views that contribute to the scenic quality of the project area (e.g., tree removal, hillside cuts, vegetation disturbance), as well as changes related to the installation of recreation-related structures (e.g., access points, paved multi-use trail, bridge structures, trailhead parking). The project would introduce manmade features that are visible from SR 89 and private properties. SR 89 is an eligible California scenic highway but has not been officially designated at this time. Scenic effects will be evaluated in terms of the visible aspects of the project alternatives, alteration of the visual setting, and sensitivity of viewpoints. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Air Quality. The project would involve temporary construction emissions and generation of fugitive dust. It would also generate temporary construction traffic in the area, contributing pollutants to the region. The EIR will include an assessment of ambient air quality conditions as well as short-term (i.e., construction) air quality impacts and long-term (i.e., operational) regional air pollutant emissions. The assessment of long-term air quality impacts will consider anticipated greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reductions and other air quality benefits resulting from the potential reduction in vehicle miles of travel (VMT). Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Biological Resources. Implementation of the TTRAP could affect the distribution, extent, and quality of sensitive and common biological resources that may be located within the project area. The EIR will identify habitat that may be suitable for sensitive plant species in the project area, particularly in riparian zones, wetland areas, and along streams and drainages. These biological habitats will be avoided and/or impacts minimized within the project area. Any impacts on native vegetation, fisheries and aquatic resources, and wildlife will be described in the EIR. The potential for implementation of the TRRAP to result in the spread of invasive weeds will also be discussed. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed where needed.

Cultural Resources and ***Tribal Cultural Resources.*** Much of the Truckee River corridor, particularly within Phase 1 of the TRRAP, consists of National Forest System land managed by USFS. The potential for cultural resources to be located on or near the multi-use trail and the potential for disturbance of known and/or undiscovered cultural resources will be analyzed. A review of previous investigations, historical maps, overview studies, and other existing data on file at the USFS office, resulted in the identification of several resources documented within the project area. The evaluation methodology for the EIR will include Native American consultation, field reconnaissance in areas where previous investigations have not occurred, and evaluation of potentially significant resources in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Energy. Implementation of the Plan would require energy. Potential environmental effects due to wasteful inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources will be evaluated. Compliance with state and local plans for renewable energy or energy efficiency will also be evaluated. Mitigation measures will be proposed, if needed.

Geology and Soils. Implementation of the TRRAP would involve excavation and placement of fill material for multi-use trail construction, bridges, retaining walls, and possibly tunnels. Potential environmental effects related to soils and

geology, seismic hazards, slope stability, avalanches, erosion, and paleontological resources will be described. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Implementation of the TRRAP has the potential to influence automobile and parking demand, which may affect GHG emissions. The EIR will evaluate potential GHG impacts using the latest widely accepted modeling tool. Anticipated GHG reductions (such as those related to reduced VMT) and temporary construction GHG emissions will be assessed and described. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. The EIR will map and address any hazardous materials located on the project site resulting from historical land uses (including aerially-deposited lead) and hazardous materials used during construction, such as petroleum products. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Hydrology and Water Quality. The EIR will identify restoration opportunities along the Truckee River to improve water quality. Recreation access and the multi-use trail alternatives being considered would be located adjacent to the Truckee River, which could affect hydrology and water quality. The multi-use trail would be constructed outside of the 100-year floodplain where possible, and cross the Truckee River several times. The EIR will quantify any incremental effects to water surface elevations from proposed bridges crossing the Truckee River. Proposed water surface elevation increases will need to be submitted to and approved by the Placer County Floodplain Manager and/or FEMA. SR 89 stormwater drainages and streams would be integrated into the drainage design for improvements. Project construction would minimize short-term increases in sediment loads into the Truckee River through water quality control and monitoring. Both pre- and post-construction impacts will be identified and analyzed in the environmental document. This will include non-point pollution sources from the project, potential contaminants, proposed source control methods, and proposed temporary and permanent best management practices (BMPs) to minimize or eliminate potential impacts on water quality. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Land Use and Planning. The EIR will also address consistency with applicable plans, including the Truckee River Operating Agreement (regulates Truckee River flows), Placer County General Plan, Zoning Ordinance and Squaw Valley General Plan (regulates land use), Truckee River Water Quality Plan for the Lahontan Region (regulates water quality), Placer County Tourism Master Plan, and USFS planning guidance (Forest Plan).

Noise. The EIR will assess potential short-term (i.e., construction) noise impacts relative to sensitive receptors and their potential exposure. Noise levels of specific construction equipment will be determined and resultant noise levels at nearby receptors (at given distances from the source) will be calculated. Long-term (i.e., operational) noise impacts, including increased noise from new or expanded recreational opportunities (e.g., day-use areas, multi-use trail, parking areas) will be assessed. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Public Services and Utilities and Service Systems. The public services and utilities section of the EIR will evaluate impacts on power, solid waste collection and disposal, police services, fire protection services, fire fuel management, and the existing water and wastewater treatment and distribution infrastructure that runs parallel to the river and adjacent to SR 89. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Recreation. Implementation of the TRRAP would result in changes to public access to and recreational uses of the project area. The project would provide new recreation amenities. The three campgrounds in the TRRAP area currently experience peak visitation during holidays and weekends from late June through early September. Implementation of the TRRAP has the potential to change demand for recreation facilities. The effects of a potential change in recreational demand and user experience, including potential for conflicts, will be addressed in the EIR. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed where needed.

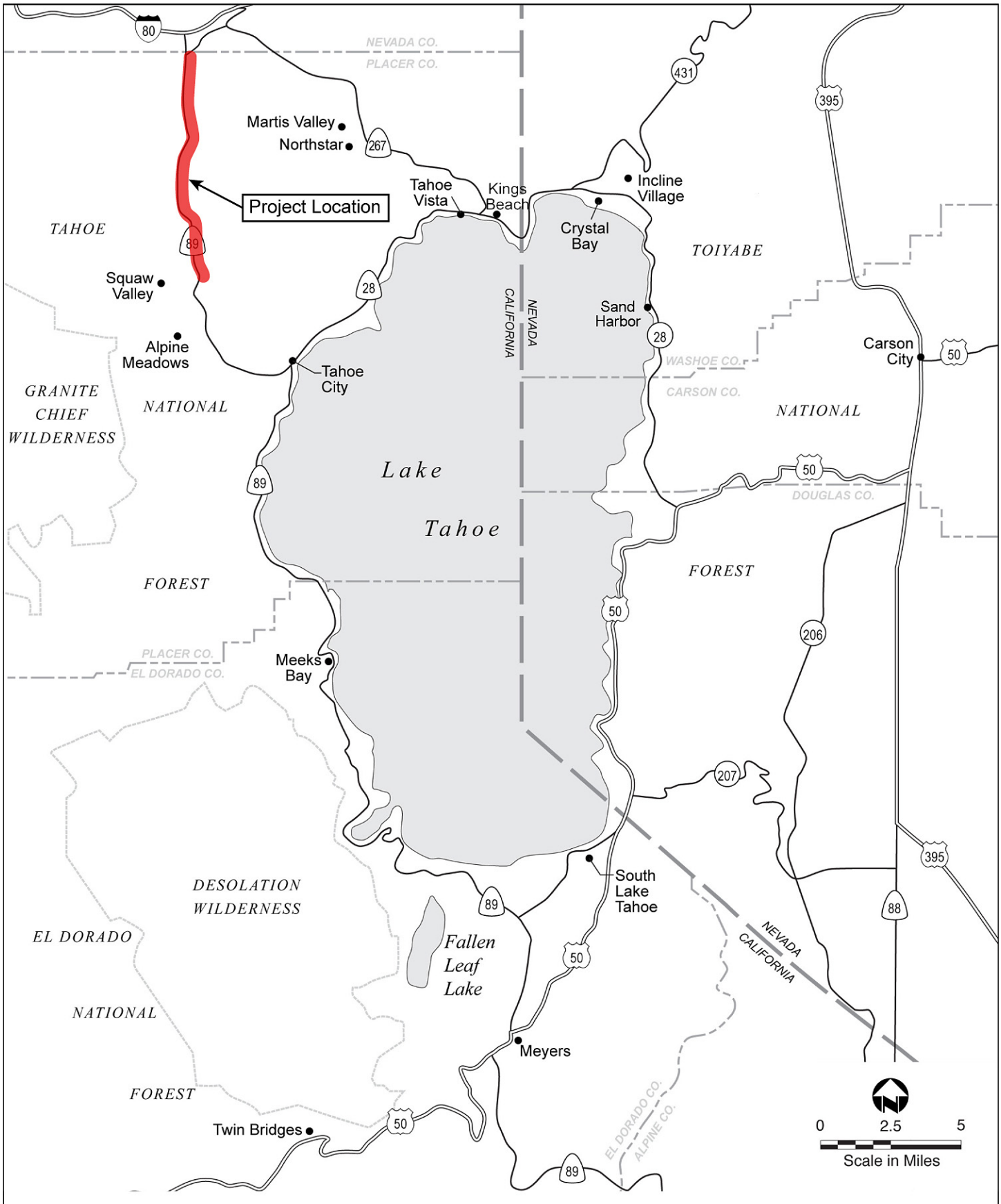
Transportation. Implementation of the TRRAP would impact traffic on SR 89 through the addition of parking areas and the multi-use trail. The design will provide a secured, separate alternative mode of transportation along SR 89. Construction of the proposed improvements included in the TTRAP would generate short-term construction-related traffic that could result in temporary lane closures for periods during peak summertime conditions. Long-term traffic impacts will also be discussed, but it is anticipated that the multi-use trail would provide an alternative to automobile use, which could offset new trips from recreational users. The analysis will also discuss potential transportation benefits (e.g., trip and VMT reduction) that may result from multi-use trail use. The transportation analysis will include identification of major roadways and intersections in the project area, an SB 743-compliant VMT analysis, and a discussion of potential private-property concerns. Effects on local circulation patterns will also be discussed in these locations. Mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Water Resources. The TRRAP plan area contains sensitive natural springs and wells that serve as drinking water sources for residents. The EIR will assess potential impacts with regards to domestic water supply and drinking water infrastructure relative to these water resources. Avoidance and/or mitigation measures (temporary and permanent) will be proposed, if needed.

Wildfire. The TRRAP plan area is in an area subject to wildfire risk. The EIR will analyze whether implementation of the Plan would exacerbate wildfire risks and will propose mitigation measures, if needed.

INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

The County will use the EIR to consider environmental effects of the proposed TRRAP, provide mitigation measures to reduce potential significant impacts resulting from implementation of the Plan, if any, and evaluate alternatives. The County will use the EIR to comply with CEQA and make an informed decision regarding adoption of the TRRAP and implementation of the Phase 1 improvements. The EIR may also be referenced in subsequent permitting of the individual elements of the TRRAP.



Source: prepared by Ascent Environmental in 2018

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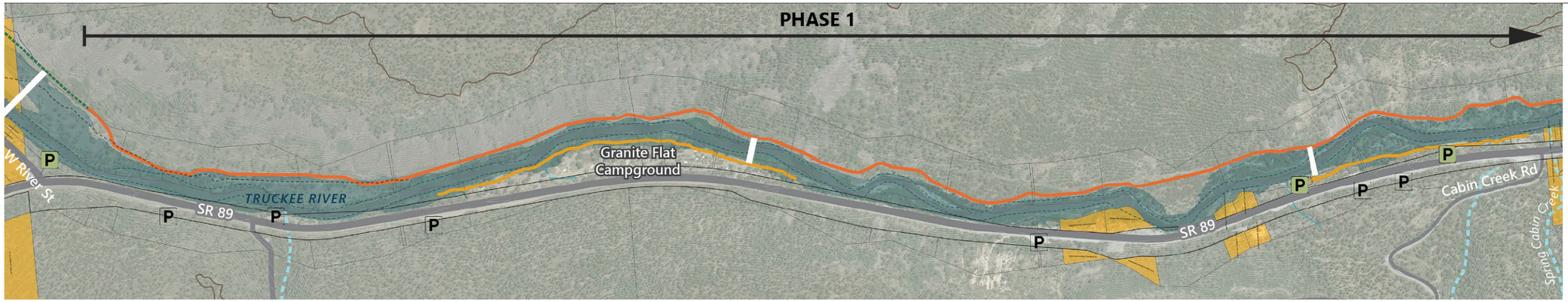
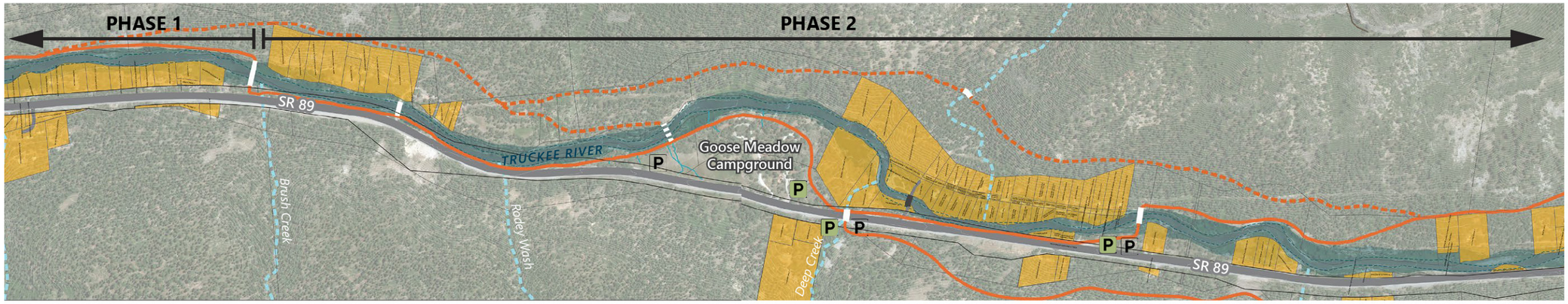
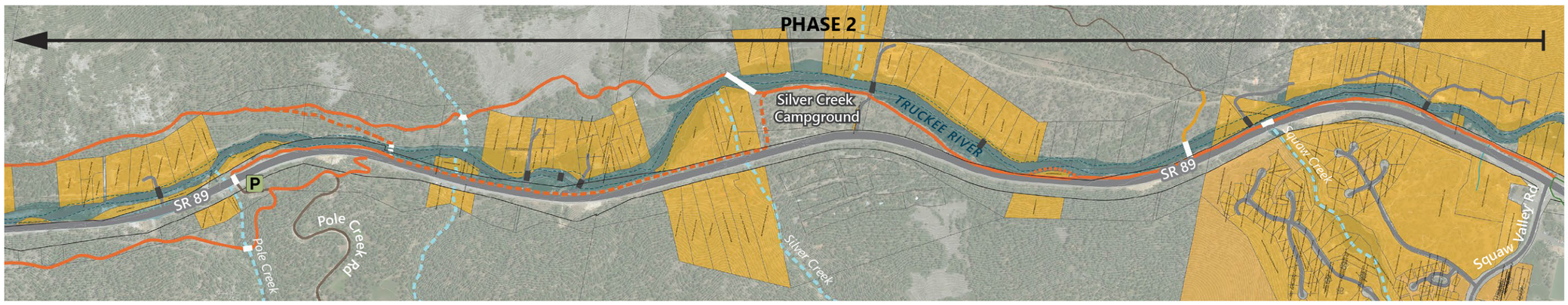
Exhibit 1 **Project Location**







- Primary Trail Alignment (paved, 10'-14' wide trail)
- Secondary Trail Alignment
- Alternative Primary Trail Alignment
- Existing Multi-Use Trail
- Existing Class 1 Trail
- Proposed Legacy Trail - Phase 4
- Proposed Bridge
- Existing Bridge
- Stream
- Floodplain
- Private Parcel
- Proposed Parking
- Existing Informal Parking

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ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

Exhibit 2 **Project Site**