

Staff Report 16

APPLICANT:

Gordon Properties, L.P., a California limited partnership

PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 4550 North Lake Boulevard, near Carnelian Bay, Placer County.

AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of an existing pier, boat lift, and two mooring buoys.

TERM:

10 years, beginning February 1, 2023.

CONSIDERATION:

\$1,347 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- Lessee expressly acknowledges that a permit from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) is required for the Authorized Improvements and failure to obtain a permit from TRPA and maintain compliance with that permit may result in TRPA imposing civil penalties and will constitute a breach of this lease.
- Lessee shall not store any personal items or construct any improvements in the Public Trust easement which may impair the public uses of access, navigation, fishing, and lake-related recreation.
- The lease provides that signs shall be posted on each side of the pier to indicate passage and to provide continuous shoreline access to the Public Trust Easement below elevation 6228.75 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum (LTD).

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

AUTHORITY:

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6501.1, 6503, 6503.5, and 6505.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:

On February 22, 2013, the Commission authorized a General Lease – Recreational Use for an existing pier, boat lift, and two mooring buoys to Gordon Properties, L.P., a California limited partnership ([February 22, 2013, Item 48](#)).

Pursuant to the lease provision that the Commission could modify the rent periodically during the lease term, staff reviewed and revised the rent from \$1,679 per year to \$1,325 per year, effective February 1, 2018 ([April 19, 2018, Item 42](#)). The lease will expire on January 31, 2023.

The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use, for the use and maintenance of the existing pier, boat lift, and two mooring buoys. TRPA registered the two mooring buoys and boat lift on May 22, 2019, under registration number 10375.

The Applicant owns the upland parcel. The pier, boat lift, and two mooring buoys are privately owned and maintained, and are used for the docking and mooring of boats and facilitate recreational boating. Recreational boating is a water-dependent use that is generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust land (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5).

The pier is built on steel pilings with the immediate area of the pier being a relatively flat beach with small stones and boulders. The topography and location of the upland structure provides access for the pier. Public access for pedestrians and lake-related activities is available at varying lake levels underneath the pier within the Public Trust easement. Signs are required to be posted on each side of the pier identifying the designated public passageway and are required to be in place at all times. The buoys are located directly lakeward of the upland property and occupy a relatively small area of the lake.

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and reserves an easement to the public for Public Trust-consistent uses. Upon termination of the proposed lease, the lessee may

be required to remove all improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition.

The proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon. The lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the people of the State for the occupation of the public land involved.

CLIMATE CHANGE:

Climate change significantly affects inland non-tidal lakes such as Lake Tahoe. The frequency and severity of natural disasters like flooding, wildfire, drought, extreme heat, and storms is increasing throughout the state of California, including the Sierra Nevada mountains, and will continue to accelerate through the end of the century. Structures along the shores of inland lakes are particularly vulnerable to the more frequent and extreme weather events and shifts in seasonal characteristics.

According to California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, released in 2018, the most significant impacts of climate change in the Sierra Nevada Region are more intense heat, precipitation extremes, declining snowpacks, and changes in streamflow timing. The long-term warming trend will lead to warmer and shorter winters, and longer and dryer summers. Successive dry and warm winters are resulting in minimal snowpack, increased winter stream flows and floods, and decreased spring and summer runoff. Prolonged low lake levels will become normal. Low lake level conditions can create more expansive beaches and increased shoreline access in dry months. However, these conditions interfere with boat launching and mooring facilities. This impact is most noticeable where the facilities are sited on shallow, low gradient lake bottom locations.

Dry winters will be punctuated with exceedingly wet years where prolonged and excessive precipitation can produce flash floods. High precipitation in these years will result in higher lake levels, causing beaches to narrow and reducing public access. Extra saturation of the soil can increase erosion, especially following intense wildfire seasons. Surface runoff water may carry more sediment into the lake, adversely impacting water quality and clarity.

Climate change may also lead to more intense and unpredictable storm events and winds. These storms may deviate from prevailing wind patterns for the region. These winds can accelerate shoreline erosion in some areas or cause erosion in areas not typically subject to erosion. Additionally, these winds can increase wave damage on structures and boats along the lake.

Improvements authorized under this lease may require more frequent inspection and maintenance to ensure they are not displaced during storm events. Watercraft moored to buoys, piers, or docks are also vulnerable to damage from high wind events and excessive waves.

CONCLUSION:

For all the reasons above, staff believes the issuance of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the proposed lease; is in the best interests of the State.

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

1. Approval or denial of the application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects a use of sovereign land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's Public Trust lands as authorized by law. The lessee has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.
2. This action is consistent with the "Leading Climate Activism" and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Areas of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

EXHIBITS:

- A. Land Description
- B. Site and Location Map

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE’S BEST INTERESTS:

Find that issuance of the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with the Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the foreseeable term of the lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

AUTHORIZATION:

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning February 1, 2023, for a term of 10 years, for the use and maintenance of an existing pier, boat lift, and two mooring buoys, as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B (for reference purposes only) attached and by this reference made a part hereof; annual rent in the amount of \$1,347 with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

EXHIBIT A

LEASE 8448

LAND DESCRIPTION

Three parcels of submerged lands situated in the bed of Lake Tahoe, lying adjacent to Lot 2 of fractional Section 21, Township 16 North, Range 17 East, M.D.B.&M., as shown on Official Government Township Plat approved November 10, 1865, County of Placer, State of California, more particularly described as follows:

PARCEL 1 – PIER

All those lands underlying an existing pier with catwalk and boat lift, lying adjacent to that parcel described in Grant Deed recorded December 23, 1996 as Document Number 96-0075350 in Official Records of said County.

TOGETHER WITH any applicable Impact Area(s).

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion lying landward of elevation 6223 feet LTD on the shoreline of said Lake Tahoe.

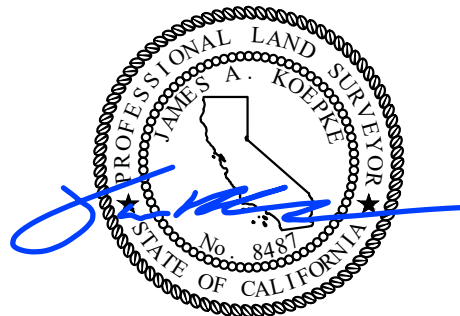
PARCELS 2 & 3 – BUOYS

Two circular parcels of land, each being 50 feet in diameter, underlying two existing buoys lying adjacent to that parcel described in Grant Deed recorded December 23, 1996 as Document Number 96-0075350 in Official Records of said County.

Accompanying plat is hereby made part of this description.

END OF DESCRIPTION

Prepared 08/16/2022 by the California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit.



NO SCALE

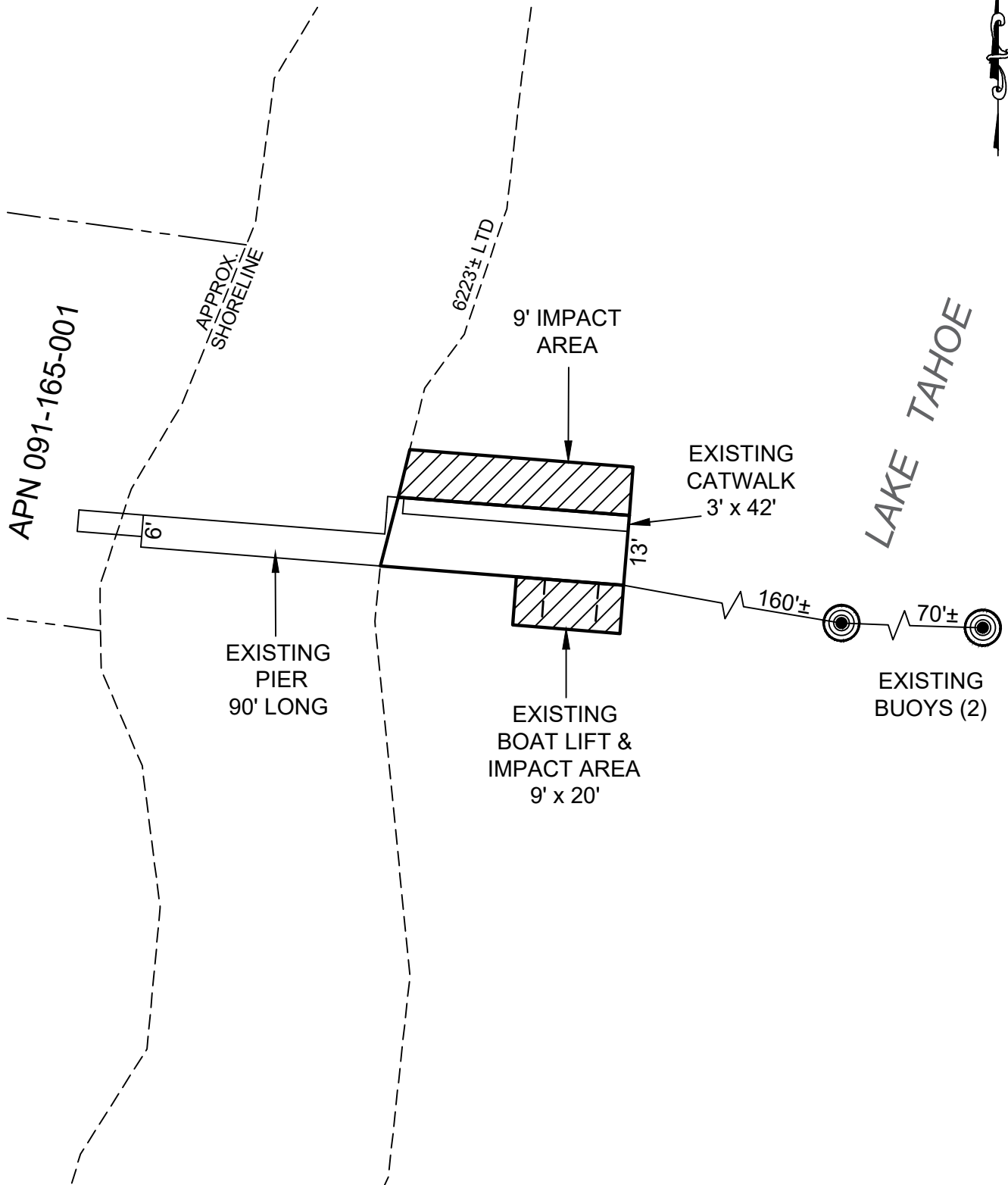


EXHIBIT A

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LAND DESCRIPTION PLAT
 LEASE 8448, GORDON PROPERTIES LP
 PLACER COUNTY

CALIFORNIA STATE
 LANDS COMMISSION



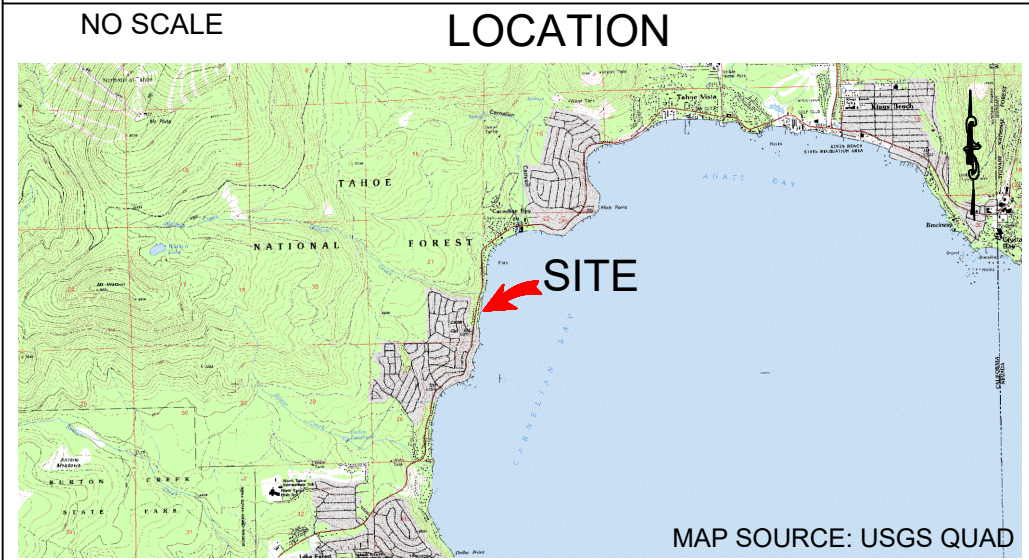
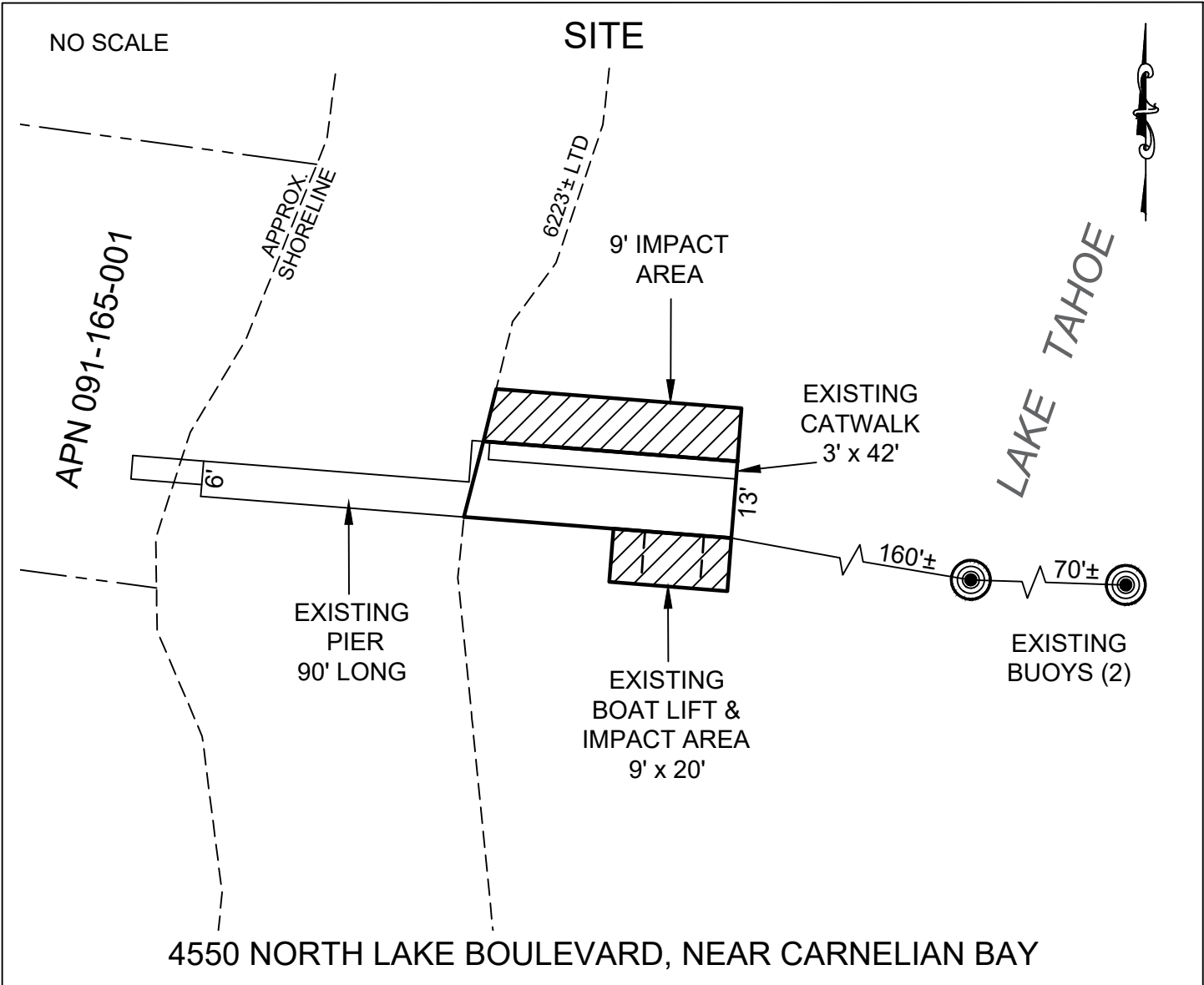
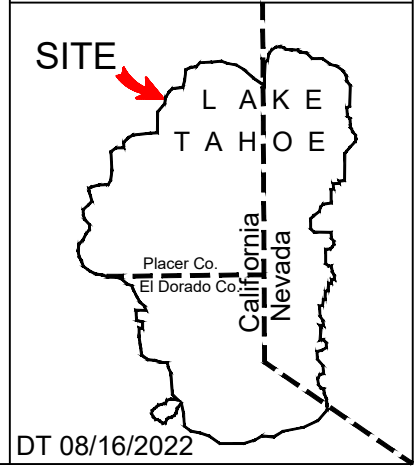


EXHIBIT B

LEASE 8448
GORDON PROPERTIES LP
APN 091-165-001
GENERAL LEASE - RECREATIONAL USE
PLACER COUNTY



THIS EXHIBIT IS SOLELY FOR PURPOSES OF GENERALLY DEFINING THE LEASE PREMISES, IS BASED ON UNVERIFIED INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE LESSEE OR OTHER PARTIES AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE, NOR SHALL IT BE CONSTRUED AS, A WAIVER OR LIMITATION OF ANY STATE INTEREST IN THE SUBJECT OR ANY OTHER PROPERTY.