

Staff Report 20

APPLICANT:

Star Harbor Association, a California nonprofit corporation

PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 2350 Star Harbor Court, Tahoe City, Placer County.

AUTHORIZED USE:

Use and maintenance of an existing pier and 15 mooring buoys.

TERM:

10 years, beginning December 9, 2022.

CONSIDERATION:

\$6,033 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment and \$5,157 to compensate for the unauthorized occupation of state sovereign land for the period prior to December 9, 2022.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$2,000,000 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 the lease.
Lessee shall not store any personal items or construct any improvements in the Public Trust easement which may impair the public's right of access for navigation, fishing, and public trust consistent recreational uses.

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 September 14, 2012, the Commission authorized a General Lease – Recreational Use to Star Harbor Association, for an existing pier and 15 mooring buoys ([Item 35, August 14, 2012](#)). The lease was amended April 23, 2015, to include maintenance dredging and adjust the rental rate (Item 39, April 23, 2015). The lease expired on January 31, 2022. The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use for the use and maintenance of an existing pier and 15 mooring buoys. On December 30, 2021, the Applicant registered the moorings with TRPA (Registration No. 10147).

Staff recommends the Commission accept compensation from the Applicant in the amount of \$5,157 for the unauthorized occupation of state land for the existing pier and 15 mooring buoys for the period beginning January 31, 2022, the day that the prior lease ended, through December 8, 2022, the day before issuing the proposed lease.

The subject facilities are privately owned and maintained 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 and mooring buoys have existed for many years at this location. The topography is flat with small rocks and pebbles, making the shoreline accessible to pedestrians in this area. The pier is built on pilings, and public access for pedestrians and lake-related activities are available at varying water levels underneath the pier within the Public Trust easement. 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 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 streamflows 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 winds and storm events. 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 consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and 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. If the Commission denies the application, the Applicant as prior lessee may be required to remove the pier and 15 mooring buoys, and restore the premises to their original condition. 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, 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 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:

1. Authorize acceptance of compensation from the Applicant in the amount of \$5,157 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period beginning January 31, 2022 through December 8, 2022.
2. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning December 9, 2022, for a term of 10 years, for the use and maintenance of an existing pier and 15 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 \$6,033, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$2,000,000 per occurrence.

EXHIBIT A

LEASE 4694

LAND DESCRIPTION

Two(2) parcels of submerged lands lying adjacent to Section 5, Township 15 North, Range 17 East, M.D.B. & M., as shown on official U.S. Government Township Plat approved on November 9, 1866, Placer County, State of California, described as follows:

Parcel 1 (Pier)

All those lands underlying an existing pier and stairs lying adjacent to that certain parcel of land described in Exhibit A of Grant Deed recorded in Book 1664, Page 538, Official Records of said County.

TOGETHER WITH any applicable impact area(s).

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

Parcel 2 (Buoy Field)

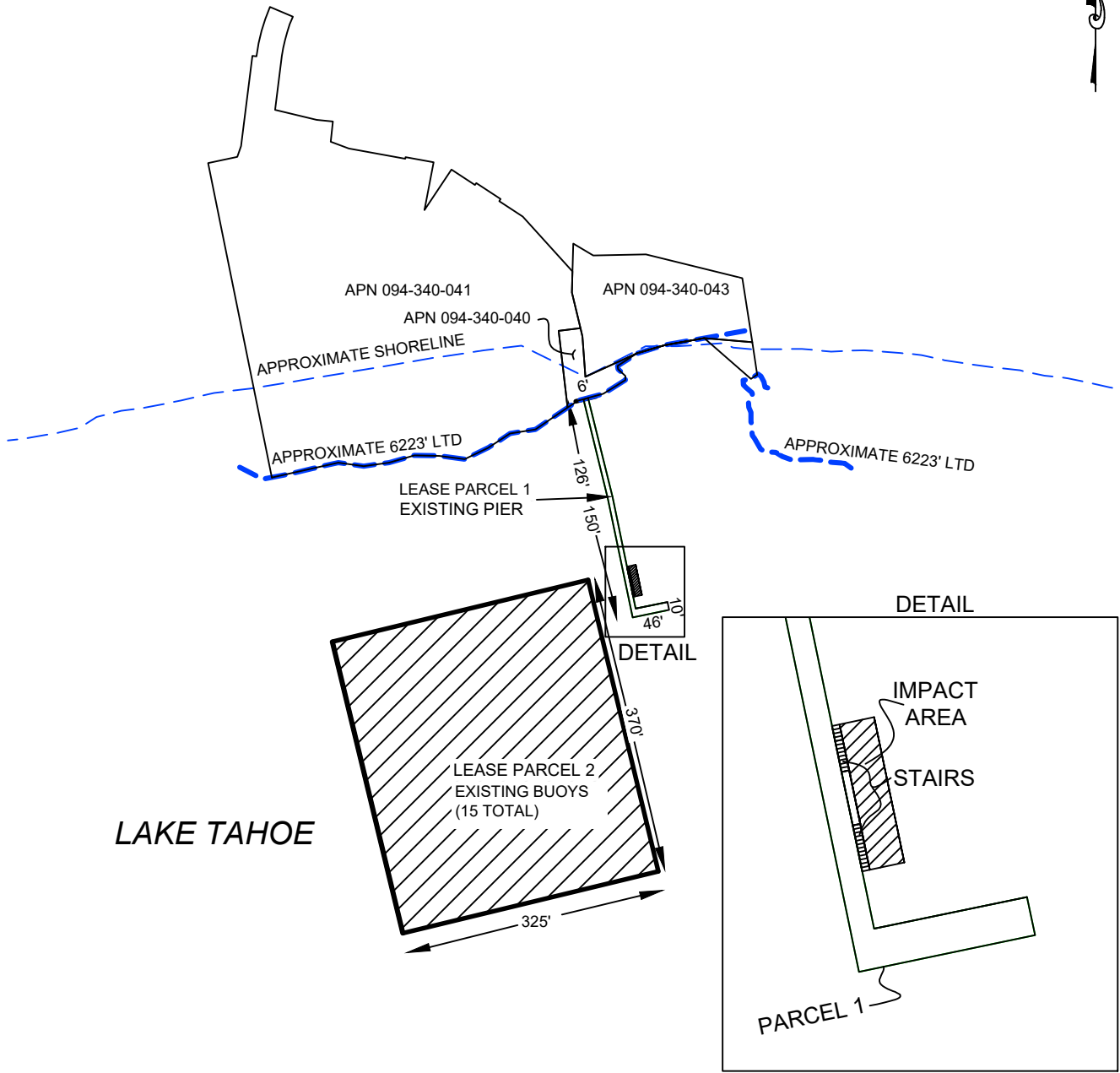
COMMENCING at the southwesterly corner of an existing pier lying adjacent to that certain parcel of land described in Exhibit A of Grant Deed recorded in Book 1664, Page 538, Official Records of said County; thence N 49°54'24" W 72 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING; thence S 76°24'42" W 325 feet; thence S 13°35'18" E 370 feet; thence N 76°24'42" E 325 feet; thence N 13°35'18" W 370 feet to the POINT OF BEGINNING.

Accompanying plat is hereby made part of this description.

END OF DESCRIPTION

PREPARED 10/13/2022
BY THE CALIFORNIA
STATE LANDS COMMISSION
BOUNDARY UNIT





LAKE TAHOE

*ALL STRUCTURES SHOWN ARE EXISTING



SCALE 1" = 200'

EXHIBIT A

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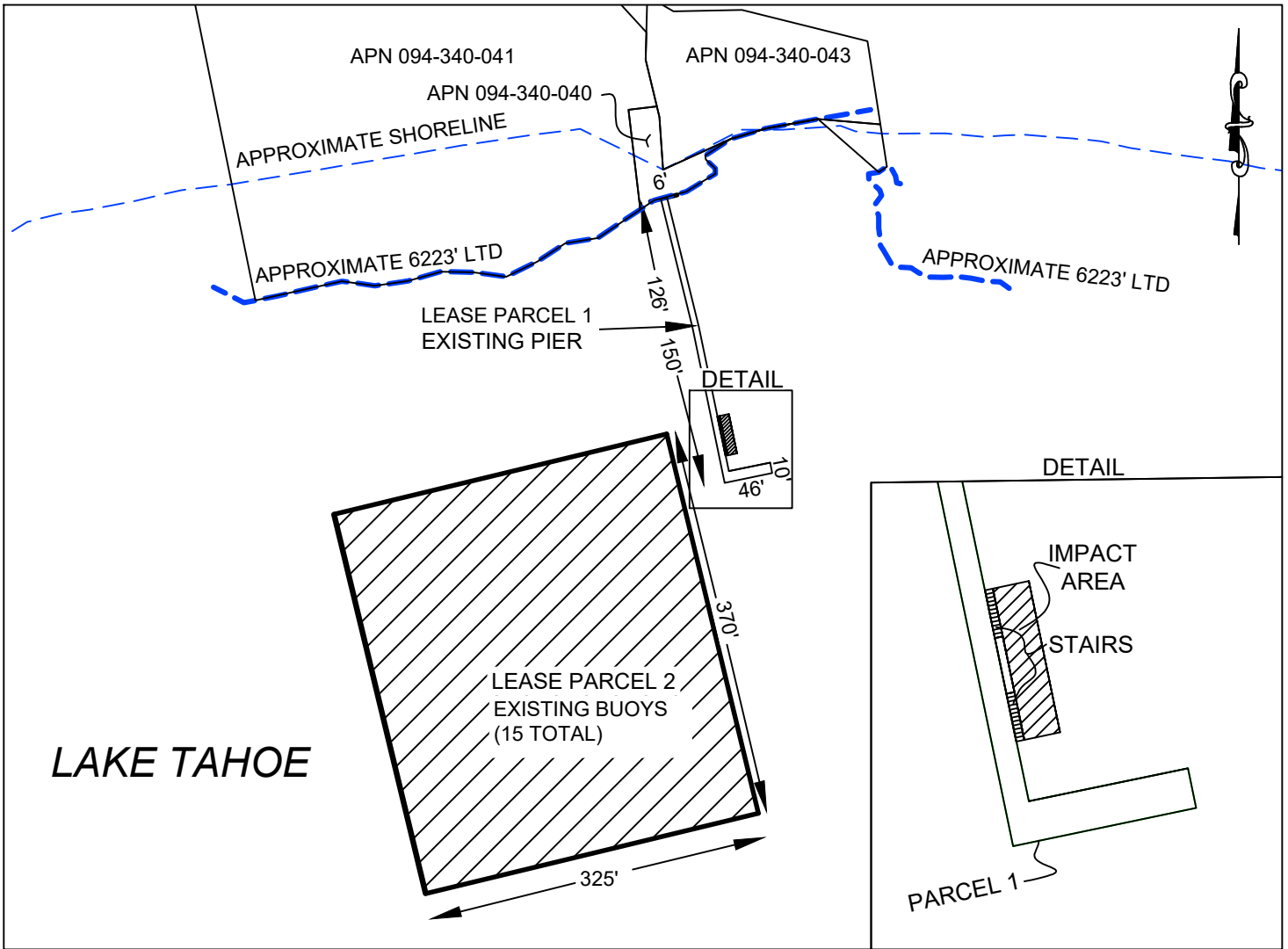
LAND DESCRIPTION PLAT
LEASE 4694 , STAR HARBOR HOA
PLACER COUNTY

CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS
COMMISSION



NO SCALE

SITE



2350 STAR HARBOR COURT, TAHOE CITY

NO SCALE

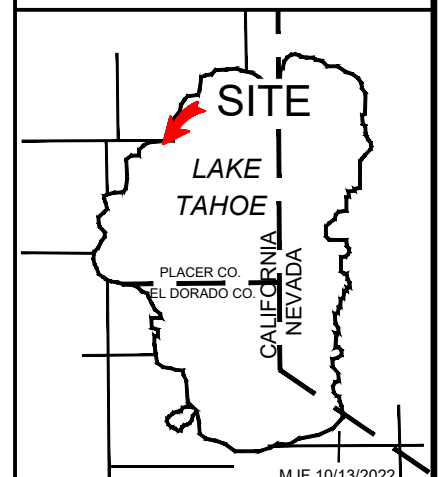
LOCATION



MAP SOURCE: USGS QUAD

Exhibit B

LEASE 4694
STAR HARBOR ASSOCIATION
APN 094-340-040 & 094-340-041
GENERAL LEASE -
RECREATIONAL USE
PLACER COUNTY



MJF 10/13/2022

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.