NOTICE OF PREPARATION

TOWN OF MAMMOTH LAKES
MAMMOTH YOSEMITE AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

Date: October 21, 2019

To: Reviewing Agencies and Other Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Project Title: Mammoth Yosemite Airport Improvements

Project Proponent: Town of Mammoth Lakes

Scoping Meeting: October 24, 2019 at 4:00 PM, Town Council Chambers, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes, California 93546

The Town of Mammoth Lakes will prepare an Environmental Impact (EIR) for a proposed newe passenger terminal area at the existing Mammoth Yosemite Airport (the project). The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to provide information related to the project and its potential environmental impacts and to solicit agency and public comments and suggestions regarding (1) the scope and content of the EIR and (2) the environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in the EIR, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15082.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.4, are requested to submit any comments in response to this NOP no later than 30 days from the receipt of the NOP, or November 19, 2019. The NOP and related materials are available for review at:

1. Town of Mammoth Lakes, Community and Economic Development Department, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite R, Mammoth Lakes.

2. Mono County Library, 400 Sierra Park Road, Mammoth Lakes

3. Town of Mammoth Lakes website: https://www.townofmammothlakes.ca.gov/622/Environmental-Review---Airport

All comments or questions related to the NOP should be submitted in writing to:

Kim Cooke, Associate Planner
Town of Mammoth Lakes
Community and Economic Development Department
P.O. Box 1609
437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite R
Mammoth Lakes, California 93546
Telephone: 760-965-3630
Fax: 760-934-8608
Email: kcooke@townofmammothlakes.ca.gov

The Town will conduct a public scoping meeting in conjunction with this NOP in order to present the project, discuss the EIR and the EIR process and receive public comments and suggestions regarding the scope and content of the EIR. The meeting will be held on Thursday, October 24, 2019 at 4:00 PM at the **Mammoth Lakes Town Hall, 437 Old Mammoth Road, Suite Z, Mammoth Lakes, California**.

Project Location

Mammoth Yosemite Airport consists of approximately 246 acres located approximately six miles east of the Town, adjacent to and north of U.S. Highway 395 between Hot Creek Hatchery Road and Benton Crossing Road. The proposed project site is in the vicinity of the existing terminal area. The airport and the terminal area project site are shown on the attached exhibits. The site is shown on the Whitmore Hot Springs U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle map within Sections 1, 2, and 12 of Township 4 South, Range 28 East, Mt. Diablo Baseline and Meridian. The approximate latitude of the project site is 37° 37′ 41″ North, and the approximate longitude is 118° 50′ 30″ West.

Existing Airport and Environmental Setting

The project site is the existing Mammoth Yosemite Airport (Airport), which is owned and operated by the Town of Mammoth Lakes. The Airport serves general aviation aircraft, commercial aircraft helicopter operations and charter flights. It has a single runway, Runway 9-27, that is 7,000 feet long and 100 feet wide with 12-foot paved shoulders. The runway is paralleled by Taxiway A at a 300-foot centerline-to-centerline distance. Five cross taxiways connect the runway and the parallel taxiway.

The existing interim passenger terminal area is approximately 5,060 square feet in floor area, immediately north of the runway/taxiway. The existing terminal currently handles commercial operations and including electronic check-in kiosks, baggage check, and passenger check-in. The terminal also provides areas for Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening, secure passenger waiting, rental car operations, TSA baggage screening, lost baggage storage, and

airline and TSA storage lockers. A temporary 2,250-square foot tensile structure has been installed adjacent to the interim terminal to provide additional passenger holding area.

The existing terminal area includes a 58,000-square foot, 12-inch thick Portland cement concrete parking apron with a 417,000-square foot of flexible pavement section. The apron includes 74 tie-down spaces for small aircraft. A series of tee hangars and storage hangars served by hangar taxi lanes extend along the north side of the runway west and east of the terminal area. Other terminal area facilities include the Fixed Base Operator office and pilots' lounge, the Airport Manager's office, an electrical and telephone vault and parking areas.

Undeveloped portions of the airport site are vacant and populated primarily with big sagebrush. Soils consist of medium to coarse sands and gravels that produce little runoff. There are no water bodies located on the airport property. Land surrounding the project site is mostly undeveloped. Lands to the north and west are managed by the Inyo National Forest, part of the U.S. Forest Service. A portion of the Airport is located on National Forest land, subject to a Special Use Permit. Lands to the east are owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP), including a portion of the Airport which is under a 50-year lease from the LADWP. Access to the Airport is provided by Hot Creek Hatchery Road, which intersects US 395 just west of the Airport, and Airport Road. The Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan designates the project site as Airport, and the zoning for the site is Airport.

Project Background

The Airport was originally constructed by the U.S. Army during World War II. Mono County acquired the Airport after the War and operated it until 1992, when it was acquired by the Town. Commercial passenger service began in 1973 and continued intermittently through 1997. After an 11-year hiatus, Alaska Airlines began commercial air service in 2008 followed by United Airlines in 2011. In 2011-2012, the two airlines provided up to seven daily flights. Alaska Airlines ended service at the Airport in November 2018; all current passenger service is now provided by United Airlines.

The existing interim passenger terminal resulted from remodeling of an existing building. However, the terminal facility is overcrowded and too small to accommodate airline and security requirements. In 2011, to relieve passenger overcrowding and to provide a passenger holding area, the temporary fabric structure was installed adjacent to the interim terminal.

In 2015, a Terminal Area Development Plan (TADP) for the airport was completed; the TADP found that expansion of the interim terminal is not economically or operationally feasible and instead recommended development of an entirely new terminal facility, a commercial aircraft apron, maintenance facility building, and related infrastructure. The improvements described in the TADP constitute the proposed project.

The Federal Aviation Administration is responsible for airport facilities regulation, planning and improvement funding. These activities are therefore subject to the requirements of the

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In addition to the CEQA EIR, the Town is also preparing a NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) for the project for use by the FAA.

Project Description

The proposed project involves construction of the various terminal area improvements recommended in the TADP. The relative location of the proposed facilities is shown on the attached exhibits. Specifically, the project proposes construction of:

- New passenger terminal building
- Aircraft parking apron
- Aircraft de-icing facilities
- Connecting taxilanes
- Automobile parking lots
- Twelve-bay maintenance building
- Supporting infrastructure, including access and service roads, automobile parking, water and sewer improvements

The approximately 38,688 square foot passenger terminal would devote about 40% of its area to commercial airline services, including ticket counters, ticketing kiosks and baggage handling and claim areas. An additional 40% square feet would be dedicated to public seating and waiting areas, circulation corridors, security checkpoints, and ticket lobbies. The remaining area would be used for car rental services, restaurants and retail uses, ground transportation, and airport administration, maintenance, mechanical and other support facilities.

The proposed 130,500 square foot, 16-inch thick concrete aircraft parking apron will accommodate three Q400 aircraft or three CRJ700 aircraft in a taxi-in/taxi-out type operation, or three B 737 aircraft in a taxi-in/pushout type operation. A separate 16-inch thick concrete de-icing apron would be located adjacent to the aircraft parking apron. Storm water and de-icing fluid from the apron would be captured at a central drain inlet; storm water would be routed to an on-site disposal area, while de-icing fluid would be directed to a central holding tank for disposal to a licensed disposal facility. Two asphalt concrete connecting taxilanes will connect the aircraft parking and de-icing aprons to existing Taxiway A.

A new 9,000 square foot, twelve-bay maintenance building would be constructed to the east of the de-icing facility, which would include provide housing for Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF)/snow removal equipment. The building would include an approximately 32,750 square foot apron area and an 800-foot by 25-foot access road connecting it with Taxiway A.

The project would include a four-lane, median-divided extension of Airport Road from its existing terminus to a cul-de-sac at the new terminal. A 20-foot concrete sidewalk would line the road along the terminal frontage, and parallel parking would be provided for passenger loading and unloading. The project includes two new automobile parking areas; 130 spaces

would be provided west of the new terminal primarily for rental car parking; an additional 60 spaces would be located east of the new terminal for use by commercial passengers and visitors parking.

Project-related infrastructure improvements would include a package sewage treatment plant, associated sanitary sewer lines and a treated effluent disposal field. Potable water would be supplied by existing on-site wells and storage, distributed to proposed facilities by new water lines. Electricity would be provided by Southern California Edison from existing facilities at the Airport as would telecommunication services, which would be provided by Verizon.

Security will be provided in the terminal building as necessary, including alarmed doors and security cameras. In the new terminal area, security fencing will be installed and/or relocated to separate Airport operations area from the non-secure civilian use area. The existing wire fence around the entire airport will be replaced with a new 8-foot high chain link fence with coded gates as required. Security cameras would be installed at all entrance gates and at critical points on the aircraft parking apron.

No date has been set for initiation of project construction. It is anticipated that construction will proceed as funding becomes available.

Potential Environmental Impacts to be Addressed in the EIR

The Town will prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed project in accordance with the requirements of CEQA; the Town will proceed with EIR preparation without first preparing an Initial Study. The Draft EIR will consider the following potential environmental issues and concerns together with any other issues and concerns identified during the Notice of Preparation review and project scoping process.

The objectives of the proposed project are to provide passenger terminal facilities needed to serve existing and projected airline traffic.

- *Aesthetics and Visual Resources* – The EIR will identify and describe existing views of the Airport and environs as seen from Airport Road, US 395 and open space lands surrounding the Airport. The proposed project may result in short-term aesthetic impacts related to project construction and long-term effects from the addition of new terminal area buildings, lighting and other improvements. Potential effects of these changes on existing views from the affected public places and on the populations using these facilities will be evaluated in the EIR.

- *Agriculture and Forestry Resources* – The EIR will document the suitability of the project site for agriculture and forestry and the effects of proposed development on these on-site capabilities, if any. The EIR will consider the potential effects of proposed improvements on use of National Forest lands and any nearby areas used or zoned for timber production.

- *Air Quality* – Existing air quality conditions, and existing and projected future air emissions from airport operations will be described from existing available documentation. The EIR will document potential air quality impacts resulting from project construction, such as dust generation, construction vehicle and equipment emissions, and odors. The EIR will document any incremental increases in aircraft or vehicle emissions associated with passenger terminal improvement. The EIR will describe project consistency with regional air quality planning programs applicable to the Great Basin Valleys Air Basin.

- *Biological Resources* – The EIR will identify and describe existing biological conditions on and near the project site including special-status species, migratory birds, wetlands, and sensitive habitat areas. The EIR will consider the potential biological resource effects of project construction and operation, including potential effects on on-site resources as well as off-site impacts on special-status species nesting and foraging activities.

- *Cultural Resources* – The EIR will describe the cultural resource sensitivity of the project site and vicinity as documented in cultural resource technical studies prepared for the project. No cultural resources have yet been recorded on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. However, the EIR will analyze the potential for encountering undiscovered historical and archaeological resources during project construction and prescribe mitigation measures that would reduce potential for significant cultural resources effects to a less than significant level.

- *Energy* – The EIR will examine potential energy consumption associated with project construction and operations and will determine whether such consumption would be wasteful or inefficient.

- *Geology and Soils* – The Town and surrounding area is situated within a seismically active region, capable of producing surface rupture, ground motion, or soil settlement of sufficient magnitude to damage buildings or structures during an earthquake. The EIR will describe the seismicity, geologic hazards and soil conditions of the area from the *Town of Mammoth Lakes 2005 General Plan Update Final Environmental Impact Report* (General Plan EIR) and the potential exposure of proposed improvements and airport users to these conditions.

- *Greenhouse Gas Emissions* – Proposed terminal area improvements would involve increases in greenhouse gas emissions both during construction and operation of the proposed project. The EIR will quantify the greenhouse gas emissions from project construction and long-term operations, including building, and transportation emissions, the applicability of state and local "green" building standards and the consistency of the resulting emissions with applicable greenhouse gas reduction plans and standards.

- *Hazards and Hazardous Materials* – The EIR will document existing hazardous materials and waste records on and in the vicinity of the Airport and consider the potential hazards and hazardous materials concerns related to construction and operation of the project. Concerns to be addressed would include storage and use of hazardous materials such as fuels, cleaning and degreasing solvents, and other materials used in the regular maintenance of buildings and landscaping. The EIR will consider potential hazards associated with the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials, and the potential for reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. The EIR will evaluate the potential for project interference with applicable emergency response or evacuation plans.

- *Hydrology and Water Quality* – The EIR will describe the surface and groundwater hydrology of the project site and vicinity. The EIR will analyze construction-related effects on hydrology and water quality; effects on or exposure to flooding; any potential long-term water quality effects, including potential effects of land disposal of treated wastewater effluent; permanent changes to stormwater drainage and/or flooding; project-related impacts to groundwater quantity and quality; and off-site hydrology and water quality impacts.

- *Land Use* – The EIR will identify and describe applicable land use plan designations and zoning. The proposed project will be evaluated for consistency with the existing policies and standards of the Town General Plan, Mammoth Lakes Municipal Code (Municipal Code), the Mono County General Plan, the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and other applicable land use plans and standards. The EIR will consider potential adverse impacts on adjacent land uses.

- *Noise* – The EIR will document existing and projected future noise levels in the project area including aircraft operations and vehicular traffic. The EIR will describe the project's short-term construction noise as well as any long-term changes in noise levels in the area that may result from project operations in comparison to applicable noise thresholds as set forth in the Town of Mammoth Lakes General Plan.

- *Population and Housing* – The project proposes improvements to an existing airport facility and would not construct or demolish housing or extend airport infrastructure in such a way that it could influence new housing development or population growth. As such, the project is not expected to have a substantial impact on population and housing.

- *Public Services* – The EIR will report on contacts with potentially affected public service agencies, such as fire protection and law enforcement, in order to describe relevant existing conditions, potential project impacts, and recommended mitigation measures, if needed. The EIR will document any potential increased demand for services and any potential need for the construction, alteration or expansion of service facilities

associated with the project. The Draft EIR will evaluate the ability of the project to receive adequate service based on applicable Town standards and, if adequate services are not available, recommended mitigation measures if necessary.

- *Transportation* – The EIR will describe existing transportation systems associated with the airport. The EIR will consider the potential impacts of project construction and operations and effects on local and regional transportation facilities, internal circulation, and emergency access to the project site. The EIR will consider traffic issues as well as potential effects on public transit and other alternative modes of transportation.

- *Tribal Cultural Resources* – The Draft EIR will analyze the potential impacts of the project on resources of importance to tribes with a geographical and cultural affiliation to the project site. The analysis will include the results of tribal notification as required by AB 52 and any tribal consultation that may be requested pursuant to AB 52.

- *Utilities and Service Systems* – The EIR will describe the existing utility systems on and near the project site, including existing systems serving the Airport. The EIR will consider increases in utility demand associated with the project as well as the potential for direct project impacts on existing utility facilities.

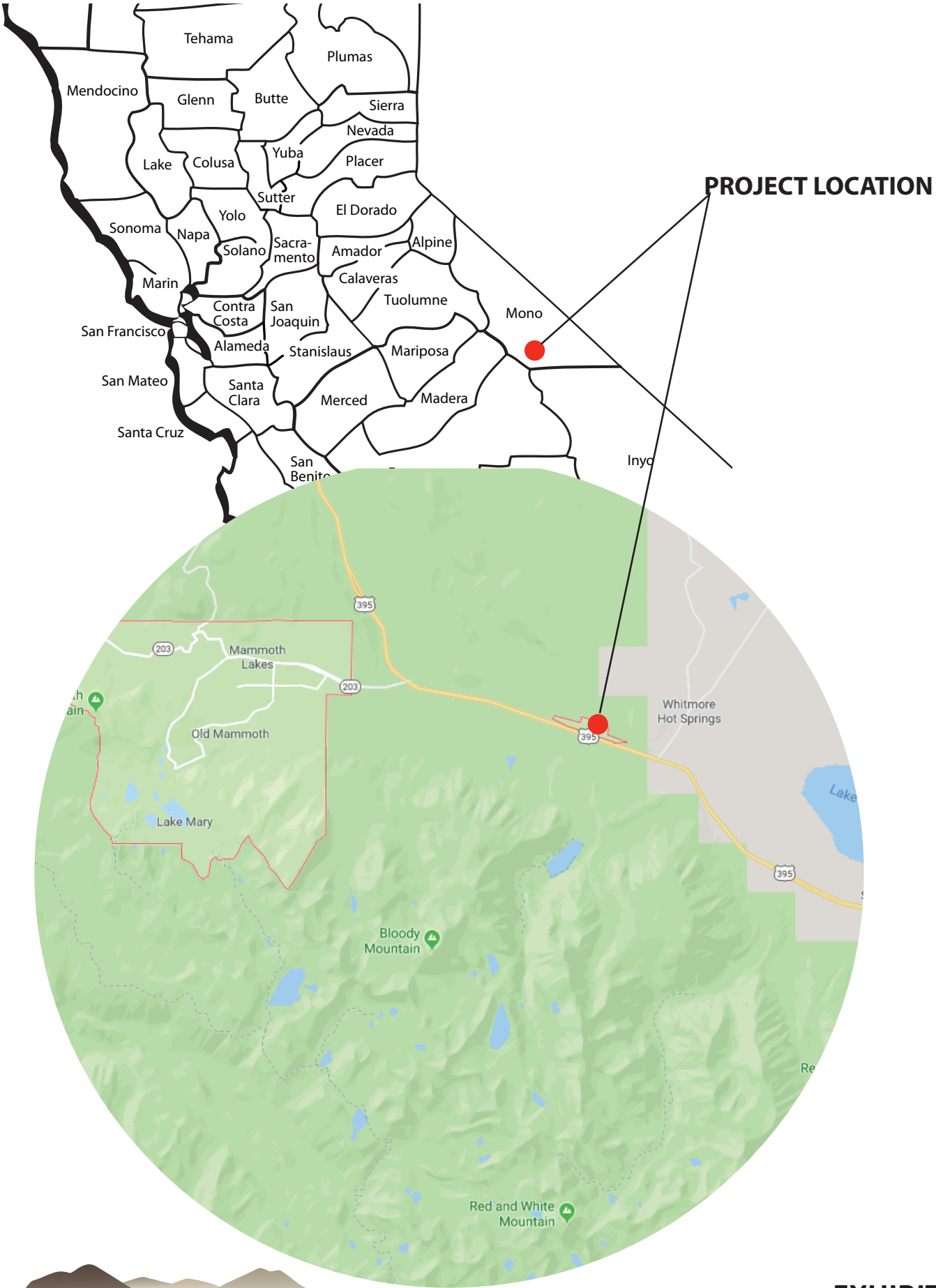
- *Wildfire* – The EIR will document the existing wildfire hazards associated with the airport site and surroundings as well as on-site fire management facilities and services. The EIR will consider the wildfire risk to the project site, along with other potential hazards such as exposure of project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire, exacerbation of fire risks from project features, and exposure to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides arising from wildfires.

- *Cumulative Impacts* – Consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130, the Draft EIR will discuss the cumulative impacts of the proposed project, addressing each topic covered in the environmental analysis.

- *Project Alternatives* – Under CEQA, environmental documentation must include an analysis of a reasonable range of alternatives to the project, including the "No Project" alternative. The Draft EIR will consider alternatives to the project, potentially including the alternatives considered in the NEPA EA, as applicable, along with other reasonable alternatives to the project. Each alternative will be contrasted with the proposed project in terms of the extent to which project's objectives are met and a reduction in adverse impacts is achieved. The environmentally superior alternative will be identified.

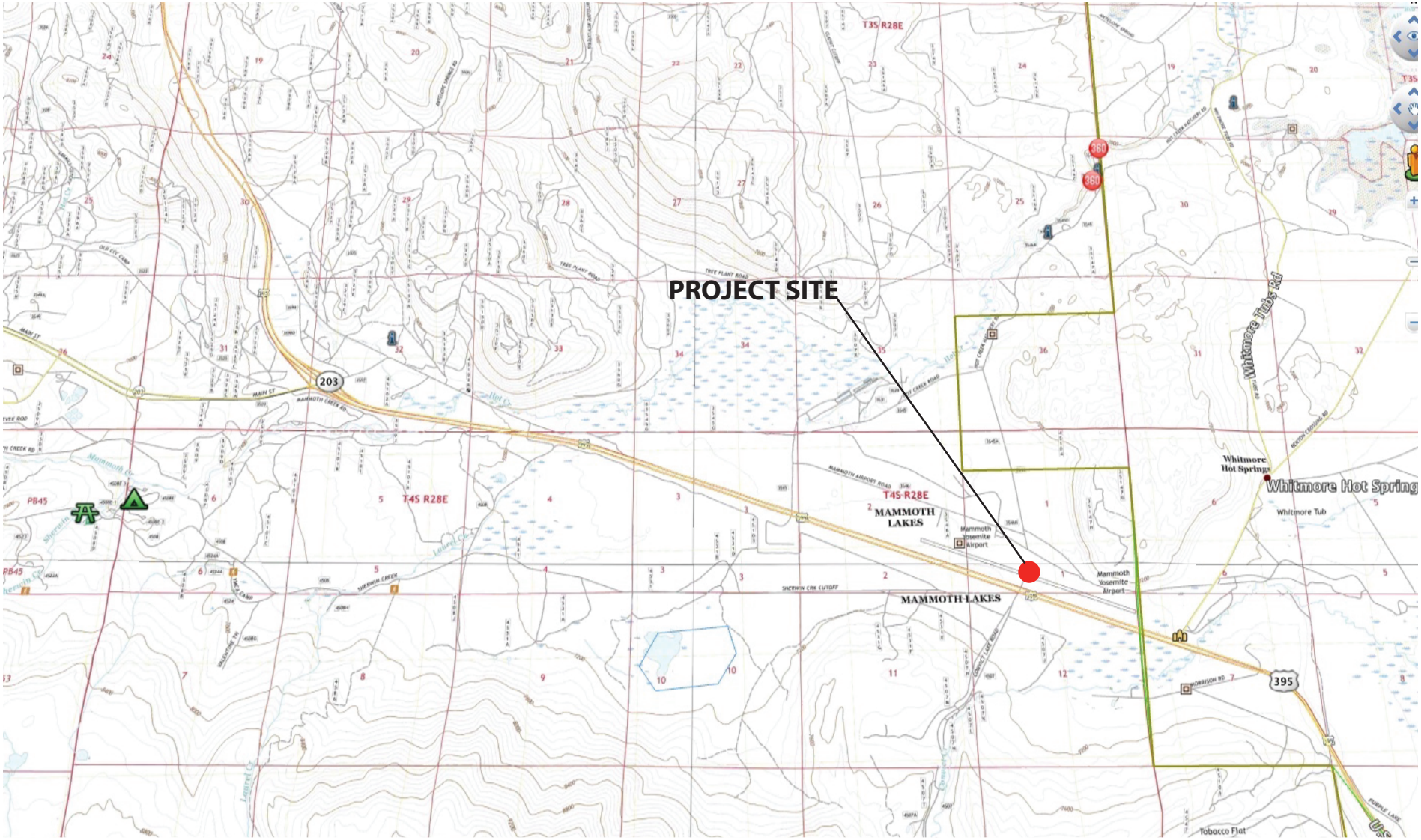
- *Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Effects* – The Draft EIR will describe, if any, environmental impacts that cannot be avoided or reduced to a level that would be less than significant with the application of mitigation measures.
- *Growth-Inducing Impacts* – As required under CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d), the

Draft EIR will include a discussion of growth-inducing effects as well as any secondary impacts that could result from projected growth. The Draft EIR will consider the project's potential to foster economic or population growth and/or its potential to remove obstacles to population growth through extension of infrastructure.



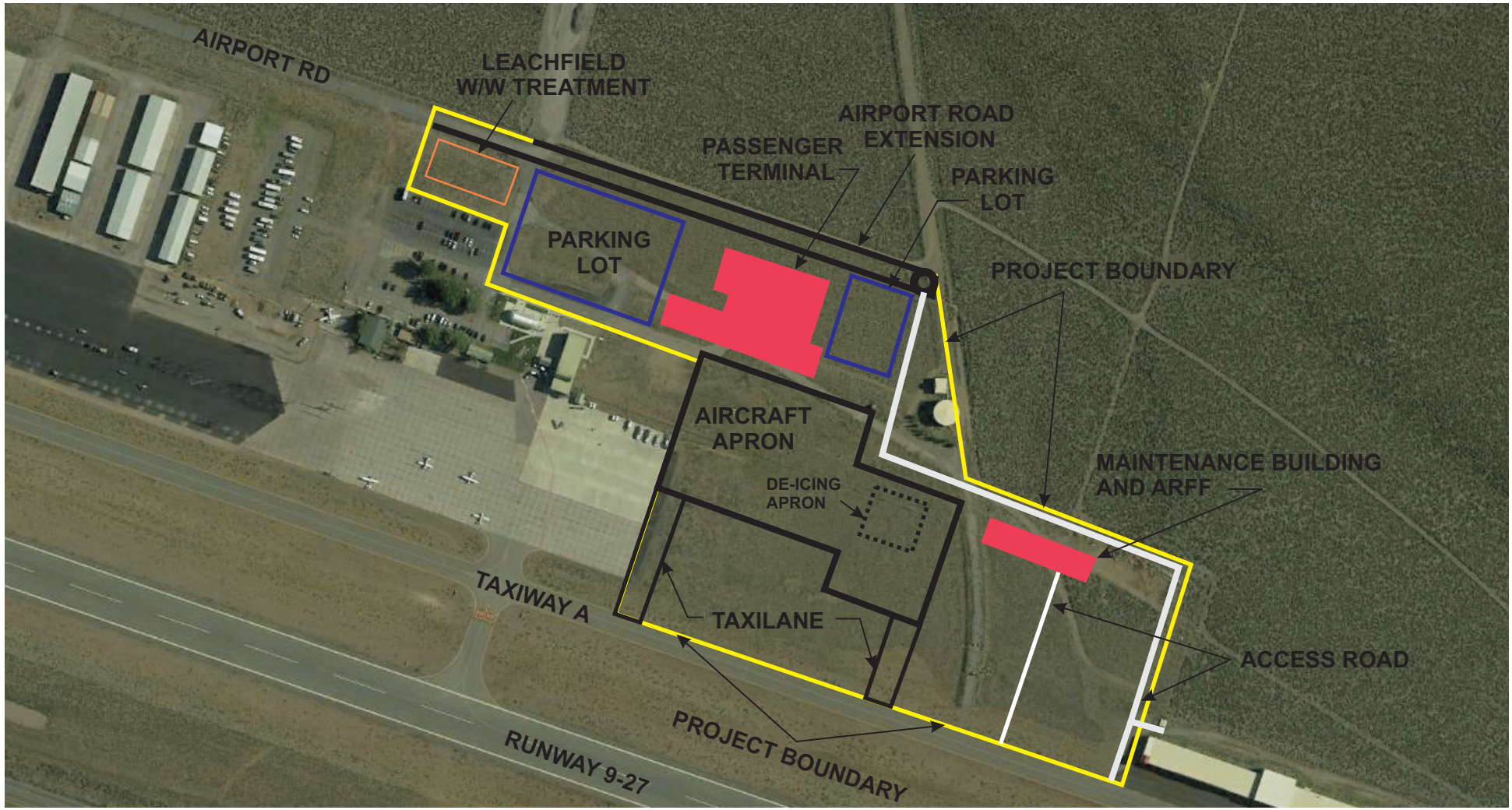
BaseCamp Environmental

EXHIBIT 1



BaseCamp Environmental

EXHIBIT 2



Mammoth Yosemite Airport
Terminal Area Development Plan

EXHIBIT 3