

Washoe County Board of Adjustment



# **WPVAR25-0006 Marcotte Funicular**

March 5, 2026

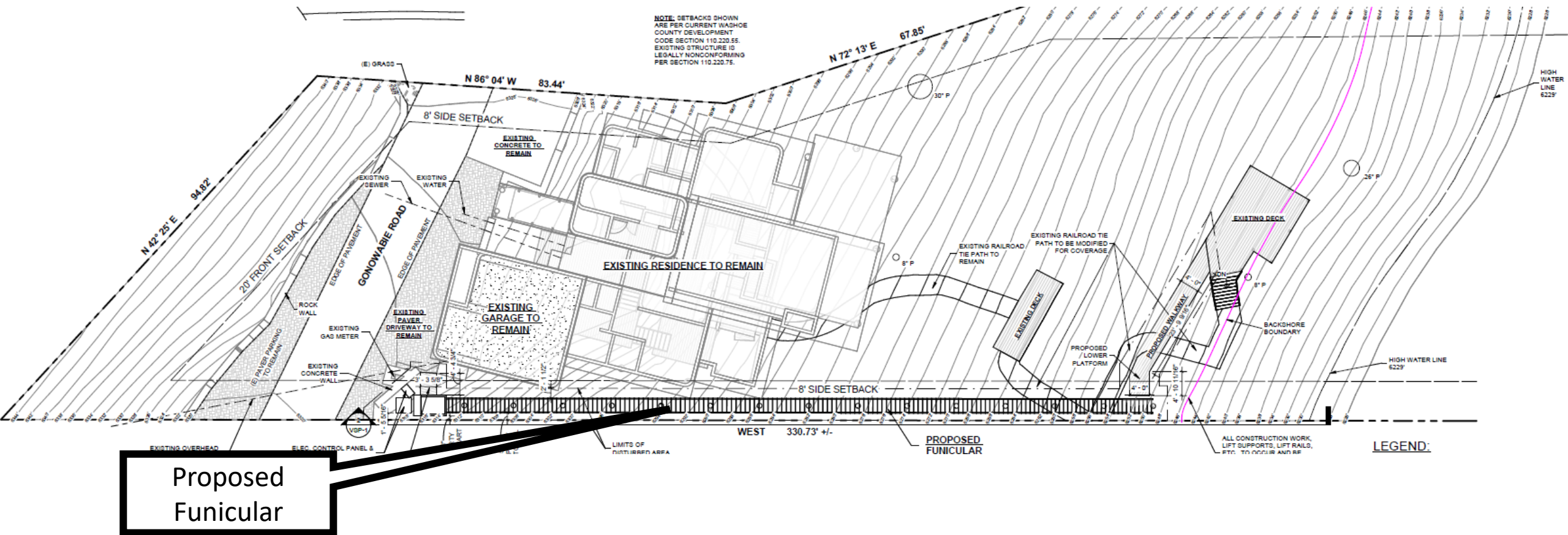
# Request



This is a request to reduce the side yard setback from 8 feet to 1'5" for the installation of the funicular track at 552 Gonowabie Road (APN 123-101-06), Crystal Bay..

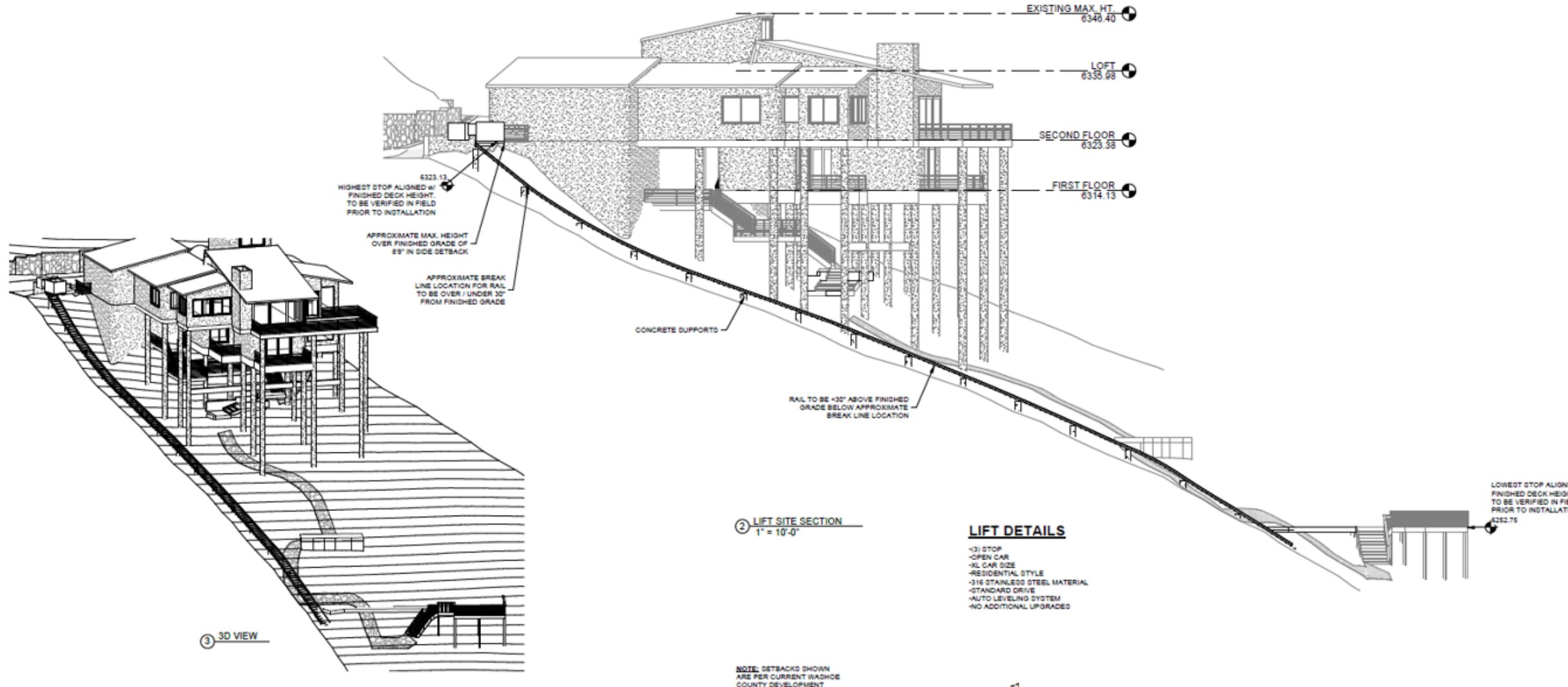


# Overall Site Plan





# Funicular & House



② LIFT SITE SECTION  
1" = 10'-0"

**LIFT DETAILS**

- (3) STOP
- OPEN CAR
- XL CAR SIZE
- RESIDENTIAL STYLE
- 316 STAINLESS STEEL MATERIAL
- STANDARD DRIVE
- AUTO LEVELING SYSTEM
- NO ADDITIONAL UPGRADES

NOTE: SETBACKS SHOWN ARE PER CURRENT WASHOE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT

③ 3D VIEW

# Evaluation



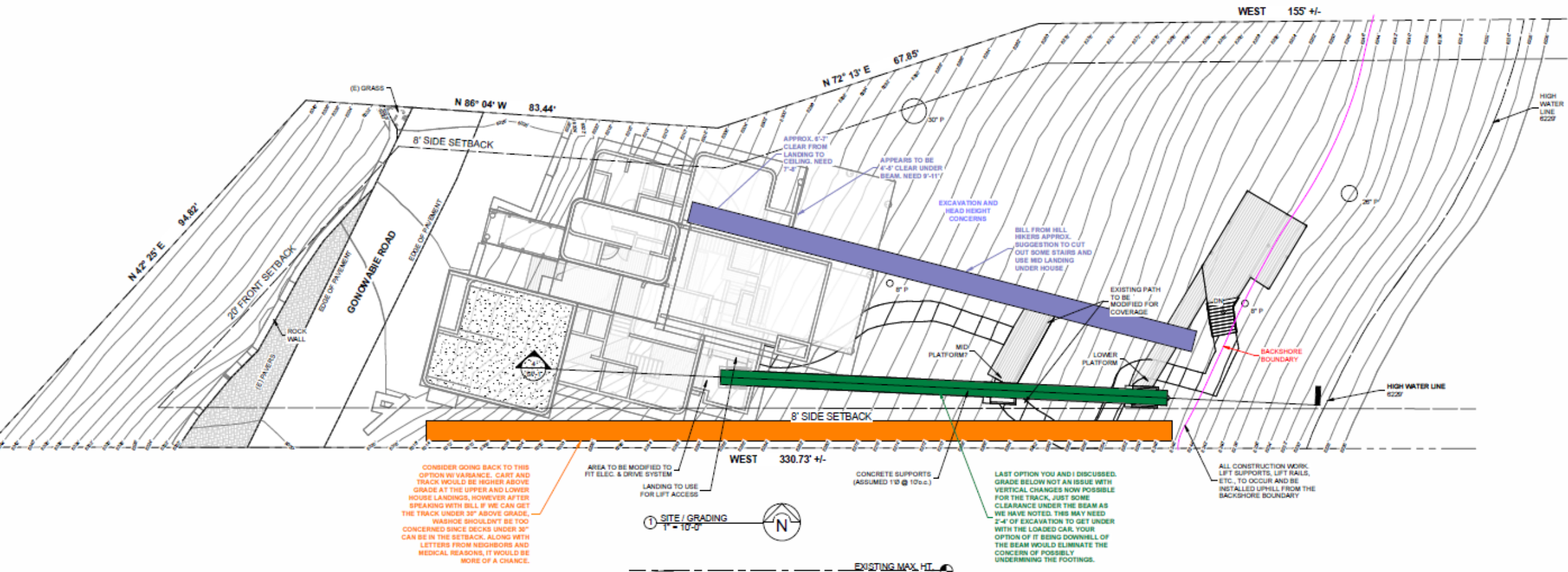
- The applicant is seeking to reduce the side-yard setback from 8 feet to 1 foot 5 inches to install a funicular track.
- The parcel size is 24,561 SF (0.564 acres) and per Washoe County parcels between 12,000 SF and 34,999 SF the setback is 20 feet from the front and rear property line and 8 feet from the side property line.
- The applicant states, “the majority of the track will be less than 30 inches above grade, however approximately the first 9'8" from the top down that will be over 30" in height from the grade”.
- Portions of the track that exceed 18 inches above grade are treated as structures for setback purposes.

# Evaluation



- The proposed funicular track will extend from the main living level down to the shoreline.
- The applicant did look at alternative locations for the track and however, the site is limited with the slope and the location of the existing two storey 2,224 SF residence with a 554 SF garage.
- The proposed location of the track will limit the impacts by minimally elevating the track above grade and only grading where the track needs to be elevated.

# Optional locations



# Cart Evaluation



- The cart height will be below the elevation of the neighboring property's windows, preserving their views and privacy and only be visible from the lake when parked at the shoreline.
- The cart machinery is located at the top of the track and according to the applicant the noise generated from the will be "45.5 decibels, which is considered a "quiet to moderate" noise level - normal conversation is typically 60-65 decibels- the tram will generate less noise than created when people are unloading their car in the driveway."

# Cart Design





# Variance Evaluation

- Approval of a variance is limited to particular circumstances. Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 278.300) limits the power of the Board of Adjustment to grant variances and only under particular circumstances.
- The applicant has the responsibility to demonstrate that the subject property exhibits one or more of the following characteristics to demonstrate a hardship:
  - 1) exceptional narrowness, shallowness, or shape of a specific piece of property; or
  - 2) by reason of exceptional topographic conditions; or
  - 3) other extraordinary and exceptional situation or condition of the piece of property.

# Requirement 1 & 2



## Exceptional Narrowness, Shallowness, Shape or has Topographic Condition:

- The parcel is not exceptionally narrow, shallow or shaped.
- The 24,561 SF (0.564 acres) parcel widths vary from approximately 92.34 feet to 94.82 feet and per the Washoe County Code (WCC) 110.220.55 Yard and Lot Standards, the minimum lot width for lots 12,000 SF to 34,999 acres is 60 feet.
- However, it has exceptional topography. According to the applicant, “from the garage/driveway level to the rear of the garage, the grade goes from 6301<sup>0</sup> to 6250<sup>0</sup> in a span of approximately 25’ with a resultant slope of 76%. From the rear of the garage to the end of the funicular run the slope drops from 6301<sup>0</sup> to 6250<sup>0</sup> in approximately 115’, resulting in a 44% slope for the majority of the run.”

# Requirement 3

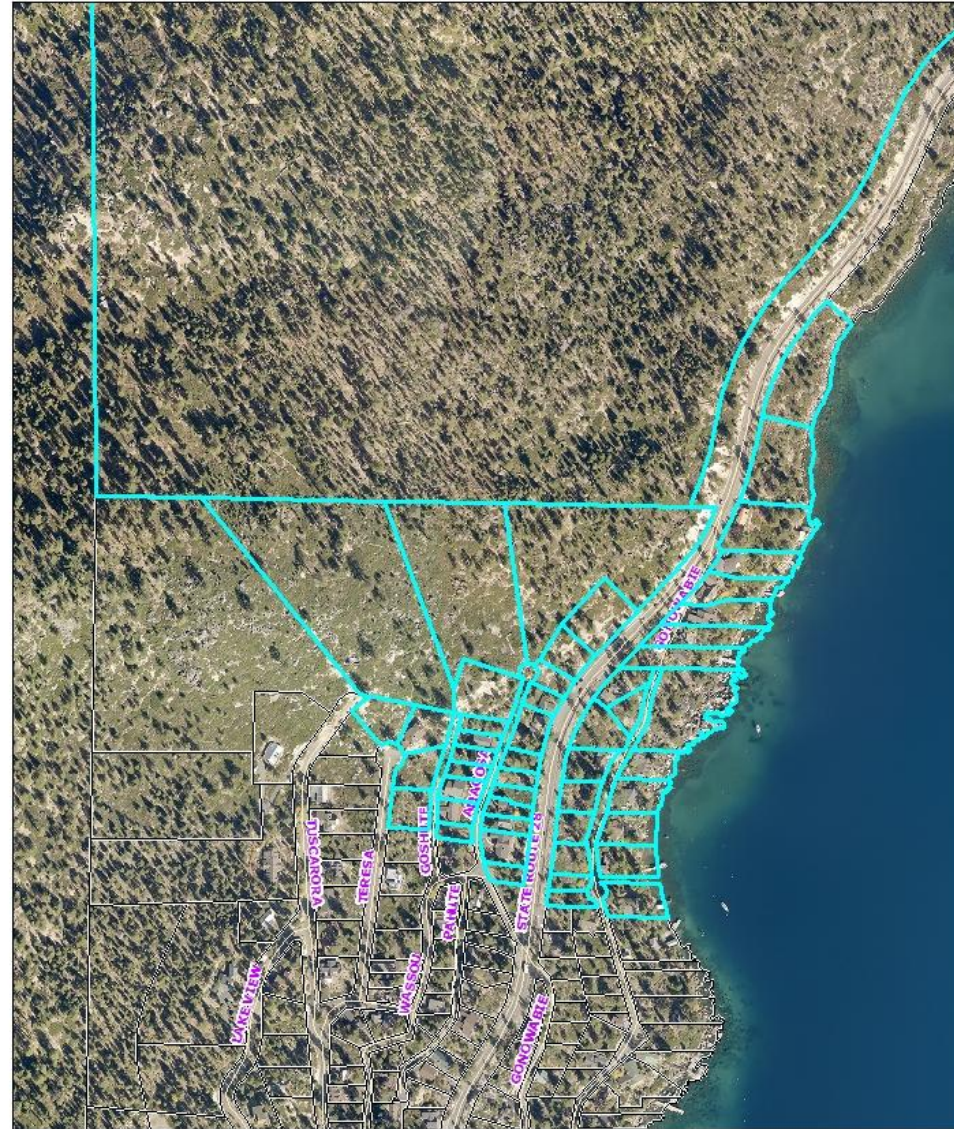


Extraordinary and exceptional situation or condition of the property and/or location of surroundings.

- The applicant contends that there is an extraordinary and exceptional situation or condition of the property and/or location of surroundings.
- The slope of the parcel is “particularly steep with an average slope of 50%.” The path to the shoreline, is difficult and according to the applicant, “ the steepness and length of the pathway is impractical for regular use.”
- The application indicates that the owners are aging and the path is not safe and the funicular will provide safe and easier access to the Lake.
- Staff finds that the applicant has demonstrated that the subject property exhibits one or more of the criteria needed to make the first finding of special circumstances as required by Nevada Revised Statutes and recommends approval of the variance.

# Noticing

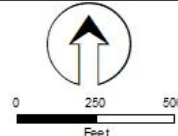
- 38 parcels were noticed.
- Staff received several phone calls and one email- included in the staff report.
- No Neighborhood Meeting was required.



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Noticing Map - 900 feet

Source: Planning and Building Division



Date: 7/11/2025



# Reviewing Agencies



- Various agencies reviewed the application, their comments are included in the staff report, Exhibit A
- Agencies with conditions, are included in the Conditions of Approval

## Staff is able to make the required findings:

- (a) Special Circumstances. Because of the special circumstances applicable to the property, including exceptional narrowness, shallowness or shape of the specific piece of property; exceptional topographic conditions; extraordinary and exceptional situation or condition of the property and/or location of surroundings; the strict application of the regulation results in exceptional and undue hardships upon the owner of the property;
- (b) No Detriment. The relief will not create a substantial detriment to the public good, substantially impair affected natural resources or impair the intent and purpose of the Development Code or applicable policies under which the variance is granted;
- (c) No Special Privileges. The granting of the variance will not constitute a grant of special privileges inconsistent with the limitations upon other properties in the vicinity and the identical regulatory zone in which the property is situated;
- (d) Use Authorized. The variance will not authorize a use or activity which is not otherwise expressly authorized by the regulation governing the parcel of property;

# Possible Motion



I move that, after giving reasoned consideration to the information contained in the staff report and information received during the public hearing, the Washoe County Board of Adjustment approve Variance Case Number WPVAR25-0006 for Rene & Margaret Marcotte Family Trust, with the conditions of approval included as Exhibit A for this matter, having made all five required findings in accordance with Washoe County Development Code Section 110.804.25.

# Thank you

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