

Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration for the Sierra County 2010 Regional Transportation Plan

Prepared for the

Sierra County Transportation Commission

Prepared by

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.



INITIAL STUDY AND PROPOSED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

**FOR THE SIERRA COUNTY 2010
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

Prepared for

Sierra County Transportation Commission
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Introduction

Project Title: Sierra County 2010 Regional Transportation Plan

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Project Location: Sierra County

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Sierra County Transportation Commission (SCTC) has recently prepared an updated draft *Sierra County 2010 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)* (which is defined as the “Project” for purposes of this study). SCTC board members and staff members from the County of Sierra worked together with a consulting firm to guide the development of the Project. A public hearing will be held during a Transportation Commission meeting on December 8, 2009 to solicit public input. The Public Draft RTP can be viewed and downloaded from the Sierra County website: www.sierracounty.ws

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Lead Agency is required to prepare an Initial Study for the Project. The SCTC is defined as the Lead Agency under the provisions of CEQA. The primary objective in the preparation of an Initial Study is to disclose significant environmental effects and to identify measures to avoid or reduce significant environmental effects.

This Initial Study addresses potential impacts at a general level, leaving more project-specific impacts to be evaluated at the time that each individual project reaches the preliminary design phase. Based upon the findings of this Initial Study, and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, the SCTC plans to prepare a Negative Declaration. If, through the public review process, mitigation measures are found necessary, the SCTC will prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration that includes a mitigation monitoring program in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The SCTC, as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), is required by California law to adopt and submit an updated Regional Transportation Plan to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) every five years. The purpose of the RTP is to provide a vision of transportation facilities and services for the region, supported by transportation goals, for ten and twenty year horizons. The RTP documents the policy direction, actions and funding strategies designed to maintain and improve the regional transportation system. The RTP is a programmatic document containing

general policies, guidelines, and lists of projects. For future projects identified in the RTP, specific design details have not been developed. Each transportation project will be assessed on an individual basis under various criteria.

The RTP begins with a background discussion of Sierra County, including projected population growth and economic conditions, as well as a description of existing transportation services and facilities. A needs assessment follows, describing existing and future transportation needs in the county. The needs assessment analyzes various aspects of transportation including streets and highways, goods movement, public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and railroad and aviation facilities. For each aspect, goals, objectives, performance measures, policies and implementation programs are identified. Finally, an action element is presented that lists proposed projects, as well as proposed potential funding for future projects.

To implement the Project, the SCTC must adopt the updated RTP by resolution. Once the RTP is adopted, implementation of projects identified in the RTP would depend on many factors, including the availability of funding, changes in priority of needs, and emergencies. Also, implementation would require the cooperation of other agencies, such as Caltrans, whose activities are beyond the control of the SCTC.

The RTP presents a series of goals focusing on mobility, safety, quality of life, environmental impacts, and financial effectiveness. In the document, two regional alternatives are considered, and the alternative focusing on maintenance of existing facilities and services is recommended. Projects identified in the RTP consist of the following:

- Short-term, mid-term, and long-term roadway/bridge projects including roadway maintenance and bridge rehabilitation/reconstruction on state highways, county roads and city streets.
- Transportation enhancement projects such as trailhead facilities and visitor centers.
- Caltrans projects consisting of roadway rehabilitation, drainage improvements, and bridge seismic retrofit.
- Forest Highway road rehabilitation/reconstruction projects and hazard elimination safety projects.
- Transportation planning feasibility studies for rehabilitation on local roadways.
- Bicycle/pedestrian facility improvement projects, including construction of sidewalks, bike paths, and pedestrian ways.
- Transit capital improvement projects.
- Aviation capital improvement projects at the Sierraville-Dearwater Airport.
- Intelligent Transportation Systems projects.

Of importance to this environmental document, the RTP does not call for any projects that would significantly increase capacity of the transportation network. Additionally the RTP describes environmental mitigation measures which are typically applied to transportation projects and outlines strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In total, the financially constrained roadway and bridge projects identified in the RTP are forecast to cost approximately \$46.5 million over the 20-year planning period. Funding is expected to be generated through a wide range of existing state, federal, and local sources.

PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Location

Sierra County is located in the heart of the northern section of the Sierra Nevada in California. Elevation ranges from 1,800 feet in the western foothills to over 8,000 feet in the eastern portion of the county. As shown in Figure 1, the county extends from the Nevada/California border west to Yuba County and is bordered by Plumas and Lassen Counties to the north and Nevada County to the south. The county is located roughly 100 miles northeast of Sacramento, California and 50 miles west of Reno, Nevada. While Loyalton is the only incorporated city in the county, other community centers consist of Sierra Brooks, Long Valley, and a portion of Verdi, and larger communities of Sierraville, Calpine, Sattley, Alleghany, Bassetts, Sierra City, Downieville, Goodyears Bar, Pike, Forest City.

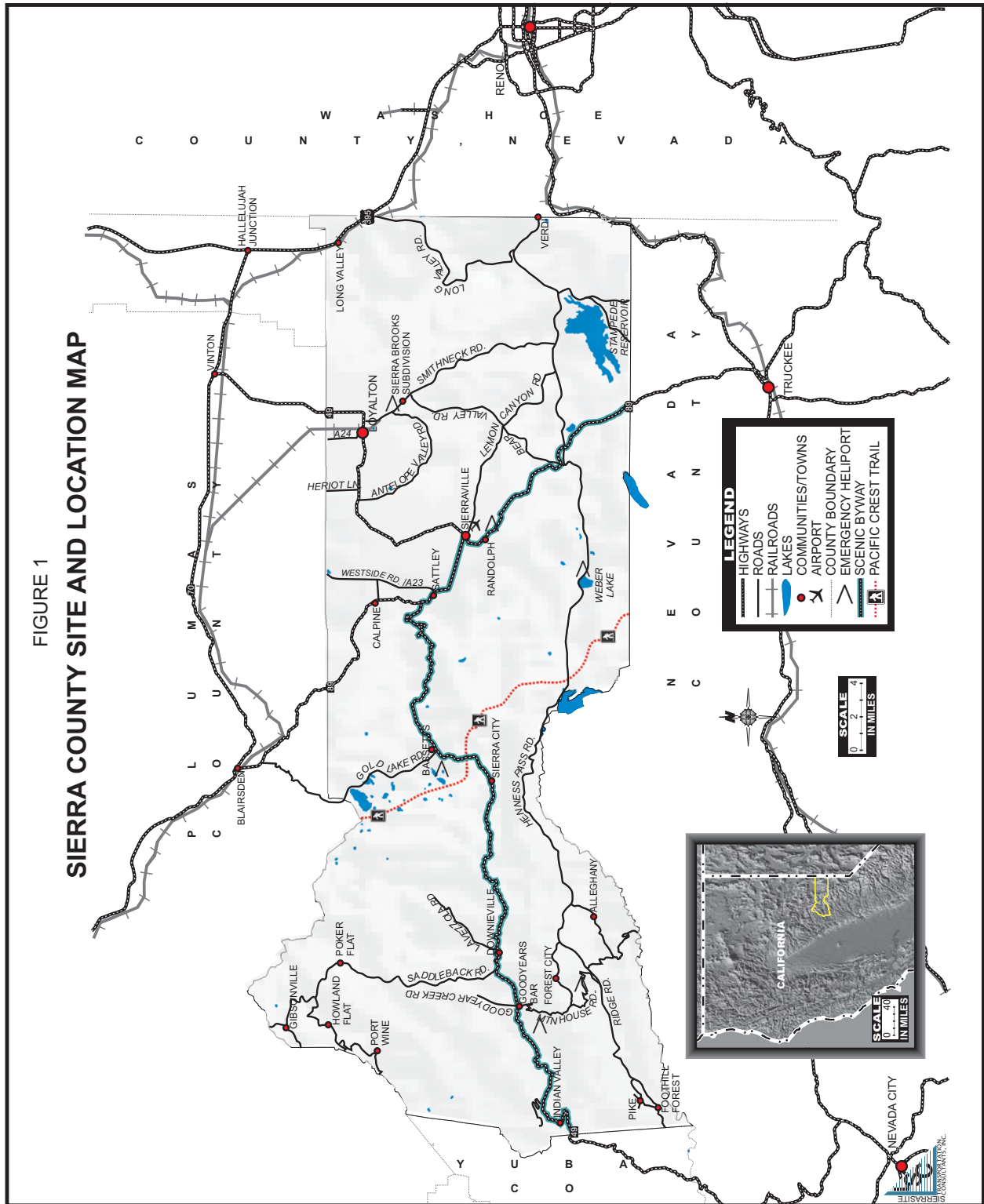
Transportation/Circulation

The roadway system in Sierra County totals approximately 794 centerline miles. In addition to private roadways, the public road system consists of 97.8 miles in the state highway system, 390.45 miles in the county roadway system, 7.2 miles of city streets in Loyalton, and 293.3 miles maintained by the US Forest Service. Two major highways traverse the county: State Route (SR) 49, running generally east-west and SR 89 running generally north-south. In addition, a 1.6-mile section of Interstate 80 passes through the southeastern tip of the county and a 3.1-mile segment of US 395 crosses the county's northeastern corner. State highways play an important role in Sierra County's transportation system serving as main streets for most of the communities in the county. Annual vehicle miles traveled on state highways in Sierra County is estimated to be 56.6 million miles (Caltrans 2008).

Population

Recent California Department of Finance figures indicated that Sierra County's 2009 population was 3,358, of which 842 (25 percent) resided in Loyalton. During the prior decade, the countywide population decreased by roughly 5.5 percent. Based on California Department of Finance population projections, the Sierra County population will experience further decline through 2030. Countywide population density in 2005 was estimated to be 3.5 persons per square mile, compared to the State of California average of approximately 244 (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).

**FIGURE 1
SIERRA COUNTY SITE AND LOCATION MAP**



OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

Per Government Code Section 65080 the RTP must be adopted by SCTC at a public hearing. After adoption, copies of the document must be submit to Caltrans and the CTC.

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

None of the environmental factors mentioned below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a “Potentially Significant Impact” as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

	Aesthetics		Agriculture Resources		Air Quality
	Biological Resources		Cultural Resources		Geology/Soils
	Hazards & Hazardous Materials		Hydrology/Water Quality		Land Use/Planning
	Mineral Resources		Noise		Population/Housing
	Public Services		Recreation		Transportation/Traffic
	Utilities/Service Systems		Mandatory Findings of Significance		Greenhouse Gas Emissions

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION, will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will **not** be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project (mitigation measures) have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- I find that the proposed project MAY have a “potentially significant impact” or “potentially significant unless mitigated” impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signed: _____
Tim Beals, Executive Director
Sierra County Transportation Commission

Date: _____

Initial Study Checklist and Analysis

CHECKLIST AND ANALYSIS

The following Environmental Checklist and discussion of potential environmental effects were completed in accordance with Sections 15060 to 15065 of the CEQA Guidelines and the revised Initial Study checklist, to determine whether the Project may have a significant environmental effect. The degree of impact for each discussion topic is noted based upon the following definitions:

- **Potentially Significant Impact:** An impact which could be significant and for which no mitigation has been incorporated. Such an impact would require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.
- **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation:** An impact which requires mitigation to reduce the impact to a less than significant level. For such impacts, proposed mitigation measures are identified within this Initial Study.
- **Less Than Significant Impact:** An impact which is considered less than significant under the standards of CEQA.
- **No Impact:** An issue for which the Project would have no impact.

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

I. Aesthetics, would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Have an adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of light or glare that would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: No significant expansion of transportation facilities is proposed in the RTP, considered on a region-wide basis. Further the RTP identifies transportation enhancement projects such as a visitor's center in Sierraville which will improve the aesthetic feel of transportation facilities.

II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program in the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)) or timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The RTP includes policies that support goods movement which would support agriculture. Additionally, the RTP does not include any capacity increasing projects – meaning that no new roadways will be constructed. RTP projects include re-paving and roadway rehabilitation projects.

III. AIR QUALITY Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions that exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Sierra County is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin, with air quality managed by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). Generally, Sierra County has good air quality because of its low population density, limited industry, extensive undeveloped public lands, and rare traffic congestion. However, the county is currently in non-attainment of state PM10 standards, but not federal PM10 standards. Primary sources of PM10 pollution include wood stoves, open and prescribed burning, wind-blown dust generated from unpaved roads, and agriculture. Thus, PM10 air pollution problems in the region are not from transportation sources. NSAQMD has indicated during the RTP consultation process that some dirt roads which cross ultramafic areas or serpentinized fault zones have naturally occurring asbestos which can become airborne after disturbance from vehicles. This can be a potential health hazard. The RTP contains long-term projects to pave dirt county roads.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Have an adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

b) Have an adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have an adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Interfere with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or with established resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The RTP contains policies to minimize environmental impacts of transportation investments. Additionally, the RTP contains wildlife undercrossing projects which will have a positive impact on biological resources. As the RTP is a programmatic document and the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, no direct physical effects will result from the adoption of this RTP. Most RTP projects are pavement rehabilitation and therefore will not have a significant impact on wildlife or habitat. Various environmental agencies were consulted as part of the RTP process. Sierra County will continue to consult with environmental agencies as part of individual project review.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Cause an adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as defined in Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause an adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource, pursuant to Section 15064.5?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Those Tribal Governments that have sacred lands within Sierra County were contacted via mail with a notification letter and email that defined the RTP, requested their input in the RTP process, and requested they make contact for a one-on-one meeting. To date, none of the tribes have responded. Copies of this Initial Study and the Draft RTP document have been sent to tribal representatives.

The RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Although the RTP identifies projects for reconstruction of and improvements to existing roadways and bridges, specific impacts on geology and soils associated with these projects will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. The RTP is a programmatic document and the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, therefore there is no potential for significant impact.

VI. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable plan, policy or regulation of an agency adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The 2010 update to the RTP includes new goals, policies, and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Sierra County. RTP projects such as roadway and bridge repairs are necessary to maintain a safe regional transportation system and to prevent deterioration of roadways and bridges which may require costlier repairs in the future. These projects will not result in greater traffic volumes along state highways, county roads or city streets. To the degree that keeping an existing travel route open avoids travel via longer alternative routes that would accompany a closure, maintaining existing roadways and bridges can help to avoid increases in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The RTP also includes long-term bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects which will create more bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities and potentially further reduce VMT. The RTP also includes public transit elements. By expanding alternative forms of transportation, Sierra County is in-line with statewide climate change goals. The RTP is a programmatic document and the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, therefore there is no potential for significant impact.

VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Create a hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Have hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and consequently result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, and consequently result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to the risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: RTP projects will not increase hazards and hazardous materials. RTP projects include the installation of guardrails and traffic control signs which will increase the safety of Sierra County roadways. The RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Violate any applicable water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Deplete groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide additional sources of polluted runoff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Place housing within a 100-year floodplain, as mapped on a Federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Place within a 100-year floodplain structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving: 1) flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam, or 2) inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i) Otherwise degrade water quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
j) Change the amount of surface water in a water body?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
k) Change currents or the course or direction of water movements?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Although the RTP has identified bridge improvements and reconstruction, no new bridges will be built. All bridge repair projects will undergo individual environmental review and follow Best Management Practices for stream protection, erosion, and sedimentation control. Prior to project implementation Sierra County will consult with the Lahonton and Central Valley Regional Water Board as appropriate and follow the State Water Quality Control guidelines for *Potential Water Quality Impacts and Required Analysis*. The RTP is a programmatic document and the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, therefore no direct physical effects will result from the adoption of this RTP.

IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural communities' conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Based on preliminary review of the projects proposed by the RTP, there does not appear to be any potential for impacts that might physically divide a community, conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation or conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Additionally, the RTP is consistent with the *Sierra County General Plan (1996)* and the *City of Loyalton General Plan (2009)*. Further, the RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore there is no potential for significant impact.

X. MINERAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The RTP includes policies that support goods movement, which would support mineral resource production and does not include projects which will result in the loss of availability of a known mineral. The RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

XI. NOISE Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Generate or expose persons to noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Generate or expose persons to excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) A temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and consequently expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be within the vicinity of a private airstrip, and consequently expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The most probable source of noise impacts would come from construction activities associated with proposed projects in this RTP. However, as the RTP is a programmatic document, specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Population and housing projections are included in the RTP through 2025 and show that population is anticipated to decrease over the long term. A preliminary review of the RTP indicates there will be no impact on population and housing in Sierra County primarily because the projects contained in the RTP would not increase roadway capacity. Furthermore, as the RTP is a programmatic document, specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES Would the project result in 1) adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or 2) the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Roads?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: As the RTP projects focus primarily on the improvement to existing roadway facilities, the potential for significant impact on public services is low. Any impact would be beneficial, in that improvements to existing facilities would aid in access to public services. In

addition, the update of the RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore there is no potential for significant impact.

XIV. RECREATION	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Adoption and implementation of the RTP will not create the need for new or expanded park and recreation facilities. The project will improve recreation opportunities by upgrading trailhead facilities for hiker and biker use. The impacts of construction of those trails will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. As the RTP is a programmatic document, and as the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, there is no potential for significant impact.

XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Exceed the capacity of the existing circulation system, based on an applicable measure of effectiveness (as designated in a general plan policy, ordinance, etc.), taking into account all relevant components of the circulation system, including but limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths and mass transit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the County congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

d) Substantially increase hazards to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: As defined in the RTP, the roadway system generally operates at LOS B or better. Only a section of SR 49 from the Yuba County line to Sattley operates at a lower LOS; although this is due to sharp curves and limited passing opportunities. Sierra County’s low population and projected future growth rates indicate traffic congestion is not a major concern of the region. Additionally, projects identified in the RTP are determined to improve the overall transportation system and related impacts. Furthermore, as the RTP is a programmatic document, and as the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, there is no potential for significant impact.

XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Require or result in the construction of new facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project’s projected demand in addition to the provider’s existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project’s solid waste disposal needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				
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Discussion: As the RTP projects focus primarily on the improvement to existing roadway facilities, the potential for significant impacts on utilities and service system is low. The update of the RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? “Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Preparation and adoption of the RTP represents long-term transportation planning for the Sierra County Region, and by definition does not involve individual projects that would have individual impacts. Policies are included in the RTP to minimize environmental impacts of transportation investments. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

PREPARERS

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