

2025 PLUMAS COUNTY

# **REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

## ***INITIAL STUDY***



**NOVEMBER 2024**

  
**PRESENTED BY**

GREEN DOT TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS

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# 0. INTRODUCTION

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## 0.1. PROJECT TITLE

Plumas County 2025 Regional Transportation Plan

## 0.2. LEAD AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS

Plumas County Transportation Commission (PCTC)

1834 East Main Street

Quincy, CA 95971

## 0.3. CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER

Sofia Lepore

831-345-6805

## 0.4. PROJECT SPONSOR'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Plumas County Transportation Commission (PCTC)

1834 East Main Street

Quincy, CA 95971

## 0.5. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Project area consists of the entire County of Plumas in the State of California. Plumas County is situated in northeastern California at the northern boundary of the Sierra Nevada and is comprised of approximately 2,618 square miles of land, of which 65% is national forest land (approximately 1 million acres). The predominant geographical features of the County are comprised of

the southern range of the Cascades, the northern range of the Sierra Nevada, the Feather River Canyon and Lake Almanor. The only incorporated city is Portola, and Quincy serves as the county seat. Other communities in Plumas County include Chester, Graeagle, and Greenville. According to the American Community Survey estimates, the population in the County was 19,351 as of 2022, a decrease since the last census recording in 2010 of 20,007.

Plumas County is bounded by Shasta County to the north, Lassen County to the north and east, Sierra and Yuba Counties to the south, and Butte and Tehama Counties to the west. The state highways in the County include six major State Highways: SR-36, SR-49, SR-70, SR-89, SR-147, and SR-284. Plumas County is located near the northeast corner of California, up where the Sierra and the Cascade mountains meet. The Feather River, with its several forks, flows through the County. Quincy is about 80 miles northeast of Oroville, California, and about 85 miles from Lake Tahoe and Reno, Nevada. The County boasts more than 100 lakes and 1,000 miles of rivers and streams with over a million acres of National Forest. With only nine residents per square mile, this rural, mountain retreat offers beauty, solitude, and clean air, making it the ideal spot for a quiet vacation. Framed by mountain ranges, the area is also popular for hiking and skiing. There is one Wilderness Area (Bucks Lake) in Plumas County, and three national forests: Plumas, Lassen and Tahoe.

While there are no commercial airports in Plumas County, there are three general aviation airports owned and operated by Plumas County: Gansner Airport in Quincy, Rogers Field in Chester, and Nervino Airport in Beckwourth.





The closest commercial airport is Reno/Tahoe International Airport in Reno, NV located approximately 90 miles from Quincy and 48 miles from Portola. There are heliports at the Plumas District Hospital in Quincy, the Indian Valley Health Care District in Greenville, and the Eastern Plumas Hospital in Portola.

## **0.6. GENERAL PLAN, LAND USE, PLANNING AND ZONING**

There are a variety of General Plan Land Use designations applicable throughout the entire County, which includes the entire Project area. The proposed Project was designed to be consistent with the General Plan of Plumas County. The Circulation Element from the County's 2035 General Plan was used as a reference during the development of the Plumas County 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The proposed Project is consistent with and does not include any proposed changes to the County's 2035 General Plan.

## **0.7. PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Plumas County Transportation Commission (PCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Plumas County. PCTC is comprised of district supervisors and two city council members. The PCTC is established by Section 29532 of the Government Code and organized per Chapter 3, Title 21 of the California Administrative Code.

The RTPA is required by California law to adopt and submit an updated Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) and to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) every

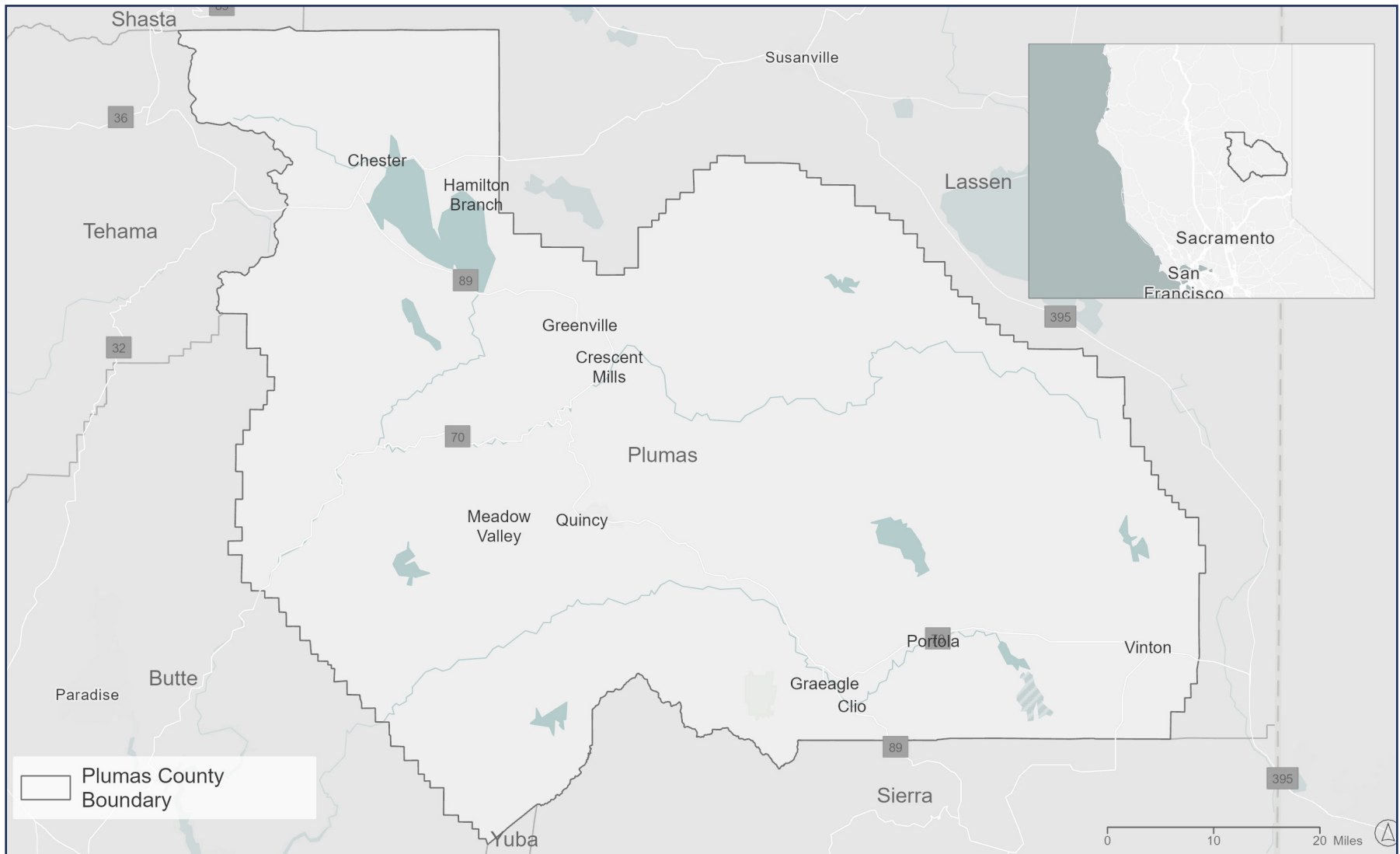
five years. The last update to the Plumas County RTP was adopted in 2020. The planning horizon for the 2025 Plumas County RTP is 2045, with transportation improvements in the RTP identified as short-term (0-10 years) and long term (11-20 years).

The 2025 Regional Transportation Plan is considered a "Project" under CEQA, and this Initial Study is focused on the Plan as a long-term planning effort. Projects identified within the Plan will be individually evaluated under CEQA at the project level when the project is being delivered. The RTP update must be consistent with the Caltrans 2024 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, which requires inclusion of program-level outcome-based performance measures and close ties to the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP).

The overall focus of the 2025 RTP is directed at developing a coordinated and balanced multimodal regional transportation system that is financially constrained to the revenues anticipated over the life of the plan. The coordination focus brings the County, Caltrans, local communities, governmental resource agencies, commercial interests, and residents into the planning process. The balance is achieved by considering investments and improvements for moving people and goods across all modes including roads, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, trucking, and aviation.

The State and the County are at a pivotal moment in creating a new transportation pattern integrated with land use planning. Regions across California have been





**FIGURE 1: PROJECT LOCATION MAP**



asked to develop plans for more efficient land use and development to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). As per Senate Bill 743, VMT data is annually reported as part of the Federal Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) program. The HPMS program uses a sample-based method that combines traffic counts stratified by functional classification of roadways by volume groups to produce sample based geographic estimates of VMT. HPMS VMT estimates are considered “ground truth” by the 1990 Federal Clean Air Act Amendments (November 15, 1990). HPMS VMT estimates are used to validate baseline travel demand models and to track modeled VMT forecasts over time. HPMS VMT estimates are reported for each county by local jurisdiction, state highway use, and other State and federal land roadways, e.g. State Parks, US Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service. HPMS VMT estimates are sample based. Due to smaller sampling requirements at the sub-county level of geography and in federal air quality attainment areas, desired 90/10 confidence level estimates of VMT are typically not attained in more rural areas of the state. Planners generally agree that reducing congestion, commute times, and VMT will lead to reduced carbon emissions while improving the quality of life for communities throughout California.

As stated prior, the population in the County was reported to be 19,351 as of 2022, a decrease since the last census recording in 2010 of 20,007. The Department of Finance (DOF) County Population projections (2020-2060) anticipate population to decrease by 14,419 by 2045.

## 0.8. PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

As defined by the 2024 RTP Guidelines, the purpose of the Regional Transportation Plan is to accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide an assessment of the current modes of transportation and the potential for new travel options within the region;
- Project and estimate the future needs for travel and goods movement;
- Identify and document specific actions necessary to address regional mobility and accessibility needs;
- Identify guidance and document public policy decisions by local, regional, state and federal officials regarding transportation expenditures and financing;
- Identify needed transportation improvements, in sufficient detail, to serve as a foundation for the: (a) Development of the Federal State Transportation Improvement Program (FSTIP, which includes the STIP), (b) Facilitation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 integration process and (c) Identification of project purpose and need;
- Employ performance measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of the system of transportation improvement projects in meeting the intended goals;
- Promote consistency between the RTP and the California Transportation Plan 2050, as well as other plans developed by cities, counties, districts, California Tribal Governments, and State and federal agencies that respond to statewide and interregional transportation issues and needs;



- Provide a forum for: (1) participation and cooperation and (2) facilitation of partnerships that reconcile transportation issues which transcend regional boundaries;
- Involve community-based organizations as part of the public, federal, State and local agencies, California Tribal Governments, as well as local elected officials, early in the transportation planning process so as to include them in discussions and decisions on the social, economic, air quality and environmental issues related to transportation;
- Support economic vitality by enabling competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between (regional) transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;
- Promote efficient system management and operation;
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;

- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation; and
- Enhance travel and tourism.

The development of the RTP should also correspond to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This ensures that all people have equal access to the transportation planning process and that all people, regardless of their race, sexual orientation, or income level will be included in the decision-making process.

## **0.9. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED**

The 2024 RTP guidelines require that an RTP “provide a clearly defined justification for its transportation projects and programs.” This requirement is known as the project Purpose and Need Statement. Caltrans’ Deputy Directive No. DD 83 describes a project’s “Need” as an identified transportation deficiency or problem, and its “Purpose” as the set of objectives that will be met to address the transportation deficiency. In the Plumas County 2025 RTP, each project by mode included in the Action Element includes a qualitative assessment of purpose and need indicating a project’s contribution to system preservation, safety, multimodal improvements, and regional and local mobility. These broader benefits capture the desired outcome of projects during the RTP period and intend to enhance and protect the overall livability for the people in Plumas County.

All projects listed in the Action Element of the RTP fall into one of the following designations. It should be noted that projects within each grouping are for the most part





in random order. Consequently, the PCTC, County, and/or Caltrans may change the priority ranking or project scope during the RTP approval process.

**Short-Range:** RTP improvements represent short-range projects that are fully fundable from anticipated revenue sources, referred to as “constrained”, and will normally be programmed during the first ten (0-10) years of the RTP.

**Long-Range:** RTP improvements represent long-range projects that are included on the unconstrained or “unfunded” list of projects in Appendix G of the RTP and are planned for programming in the 11–20-year time frame (by the RTP horizon year, 2045).

There are no new roadways proposed as part of this Project, the 2025 RTP. The RTP does not directly provide for the implementation of transportation projects and/or facilities. Rather, it identifies necessary improvements to provide the best possible transportation and circulation system to meet the mobility and accessibility needs of the entire county.

Due to the regional nature of the RTP, the analysis in this Initial Study focuses on those impacts that are anticipated to be potentially significant on regional level. As individual projects near implementation, it will be necessary to undertake project-specific environmental assessments before each project is approved and implemented. Such future environmental review will be required in accordance with CEQA and, if federally funded, NEPA. Adoption of this Initial Study/Negative Declaration and approval of the RTP does not authorize Plumas County or Caltrans to undertake construction of specific improvement projects

identified in the RTP without further environmental review and consideration.

The following terms are used in the Regional Transportation Plan:

**System Preservation** – This category of improvement indicates a project that serves to maintain the integrity of the existing system so that access and mobility are not hindered for travelers. Improvements may include bridge repairs, airport runway repairs, and upgrades to signs and traffic control devices and striping. In addition, because Plumas County is very rural and contains several small communities, a prolonged lack of maintenance funding has created “deferred maintenance” that has lapsed into a serious need to “rehabilitate” roadways to maintain system preservation. Rehabilitation projects are those that do not include an entire reconstruction of the roadway, but they often include overlay and/or chip seal work that can also be considered a safety improvement. Other forms of required maintenance include culvert repair and bridge rehabilitation. Most road projects identified in the RTP indicate either “rehabilitation” or “reconstruction” to maintain system preservation.

**Safety Projects** – Safety projects are meant to maintain or enhance efficiency of the roadway system while reducing the number of collisions, decreasing potential conflicts between various modes of transportation, and preventing injury or fatalities for all transportation system users. Examples of safety improvements include roadway and intersection realignments to improve sight-distance, pavement or runway resurfacing to provide for a smooth travel surface, signage to clarify traffic and



aviation operations, congestion relief, obstacle removal so that traffic flows are not hindered, and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities to promote safe travel to desired destinations. In addition, bridge repairs and reinforcement improve safety and efficiency. The desired outcome of safety projects is to reduce the number of collisions on the transportation system, and reduce fatalities, injuries, and damage to property and resources.

**Multimodal Enhancement** – Multi-modal projects include improvements for alternative modes of transportation to single-occupancy vehicles including biking, walking and transit. By creating and improving facilities for people walking, biking, and taking transit, multi-modal projects are designed to enhance safety for all road users, improve connectivity and mobility, and encourage mode-shift away from single-occupancy vehicles. Examples of multi-modal projects include separated and protected bike lanes, secure bike parking, shared bike routes, sidewalks, enhanced crosswalks, transit amenities, street furnishings, wayfinding and signage.

## 0.10. REGIONAL GOALS

The comprehensive goals, objectives, and policies that have been developed for this RTP meet the needs of the region and are consistent with the County's regional vision and priorities for action, which set the framework for carrying out the roles and responsibilities of the PCTC and assist them in their decision-making process for transportation investment. These objectives are intended to guide the development of a transportation system that

is balanced, multi-modal, and will maintain and improve the quality of life in Plumas County.

### Plumas County Regional Goals:

- Goal 1: Maintain a safe, efficient, roadway system.
- Goal 2: Encourage a safe and convenient non-motorized transportation system.
- Goal 3: Support an effective and accessible public transportation system.
- Goal 4: Promote aviation facilities.
- Goal 5: Encourage improvement to rail services.
- Goal 6: Ensure sensitivity to the environment in all transportation decisions.
- Goal 7: Include state climate change strategies in transportation investment decisions.
- Goal 8: Ensure that Tribal residents within the Plumas region to have safe, effective, functional transportation systems, including streets, roads pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit.

## 0.11. OTHER PUBLIC AGENCIES WHOSE APPROVAL IS REQUIRED (E.G., PERMITS, ETC.)

PCTC is the Lead Agency for the proposed Project (2025 Regional Transportation Plan) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15050. No permits are required to approve the proposed Project. Future permit approvals will vary on a project-level basis for projects included in the Action Element of the RTP and may include, but are not necessarily limited to coordination with: Plumas County, City of Portola, Native



American Tribes, Caltrans, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, CAL FIRE, Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and the California Transportation Commission.

Pursuant to PUC 21080.3.1 and AB 52, PCTC consulted with Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated within Plumas County. PCTC requested a consultation list of tribes located within Plumas County from the Native American Heritage Commission, which included the following tribes:

- Greenville Rancheria
- Maidu Summit Consortium
- Susanville Rancheria
- Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians
- Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria
- Tsi Akim Maidu
- United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria

PCTC sent letters to each tribe requesting input on regional transportation needs as well to begin formal consultation. Tribes were also personally invited to the public hearing on the RTP and provided with a copy of the Draft RTP. The Mooretown Rancheria requested consultation in a letter dated September 19, 2024.



# 1. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

None of the environmental factors listed below would be potentially affected by this Project, as described on the following pages.

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

## 2. DETERMINATION

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On the basis of this initial evaluation.

x	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 have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
	I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an , 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.

Jim Graham, Executive Director, Plumas County Transportation Commission

Date

### 3. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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In each area of potential impact listed in this section, there are one or more questions which assess the degree of potential environmental effect. A response is provided to each question using one of the four impact evaluation criteria described below. A discussion of the response is also included.

- **Potentially Significant Impact** - This response is appropriate when there is substantial evidence that an effect might be significant and for which no mitigation has been incorporated. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries, upon completion of the Initial Study, an EIR is required.
- **Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated** - This response applies when the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact”. The Lead Agency must describe the mitigation measures and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
- **Less than Significant Impact** - A less than significant impact is one which is deemed to have little or no adverse effect on the environment. Mitigation measures are, therefore, not necessary, although they may be recommended to further reduce a minor impact.
- **No Impact** - These issues were either identified as having no impact on the environment, or they are not relevant to the Project.



## 4. ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

This section of the Initial Study incorporates the most current Appendix “G” Environmental Checklist Form, contained in the CEQA Guidelines. Impact questions and responses are included in both tabular and narrative formats for each of the 17 environmental topic areas.

### 4.1. AESTHETICS

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?			X	
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?			X	
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?			X	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			X	

#### 4.1.1. DISCUSSION

Plumas County is situated in northeastern California at the northern boundary of the Sierra Nevada Mountain range and southern boundary of the Cascade Range. Elevations range from 1,800 feet at Storrie to 8,372 feet at the peak of Mount Ingalls. This area has spectacular views of the snow packed mountains, waterways, vast forests, blooming wildflowers, and other scenic resources that are available from highways and roadways throughout the County. There are many designated scenic areas within Plumas County, which include the following:

- Lake Almanor and Canyon
- American Valley
- Genesee Valley
- Highway 70 Scenic Highway
- Indian Valley
- Mohawk and Middle Fork Scenic Areas
- Sierra Valley and Last Chance



The region's economy is largely dependent on the visitors who come to recreate in these diverse natural settings, and they are a significant reason why many residents choose to live in Plumas County. These resources are largely visible from many local scenic roads and designated state scenic highways including State Routes 49, 70, 89 and 284. Open space, forested areas, views of mountain peaks and ridgelines, water bodies such as lakes, streams, and rivers, ranch home sites, barns and associated grazing lands also contribute to local community character. The Plumas County General Plan envisions conservation rather than development of open lands, and the RTP aligns with this vision by programming transportation system improvements rather than expansion.

area. Additionally, each project within the RTP will go through a specific project-level CEQA evaluation at the project level. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

#### **4.1.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Response a-d): Less than Significant.** Plumas County includes California SR-36, SR-49, SR-70, SR-89, SR-147, and SR-284, County and local roadways, and several Forest Service roads. The roads expose beautiful views of the surrounding areas. The RTP as a "Project" does not propose any construction of new roadways that would affect any of these natural resources and aesthetic views. Roadway projects included in the RTP consist primarily of roadway maintenance and safety improvements. Improvements also occur on State Highways and on local roadways, which would not significantly alter the aesthetics of an area or lead to indirect population growth as a result of access improvements into areas that are currently undeveloped. Additionally, the Project includes roadway and multimodal transportation priorities that will be pursued over the lifetime of the RTP. The projects identified within the RTP will not cause any major aesthetic changes to the Project

## 4.2. AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non- agricultural use?				X

### 4.2.1. DISCUSSION

In Plumas County, agriculture lands are a fundamental component of the rural character, historic use, and way of life. Agriculture plays a significant role in the income and history of the County as well as in the current landscape. Agriculture provides not only local food production, but agricultural lands also make up open space and scenic vistas that are an intrinsic part of the Plumas County environment. Zoning for agricultural use includes Agricultural Preserve (AP) and General Agriculture (GA). Livestock-raising, hay production and pasture uses dominate agriculture in Plumas County. The land that is zoned as Agriculture Preserve and under Williamson Act contracts and Important Agriculture Areas combined

totals 109,658 acres. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture for Plumas County, there are 161 farms in the County making up 101,008 acres. The average farm size is 627 acres. According to the most recent 2020 Plumas County Annual Crop and Livestock Report, the gross production of agricultural commodities was estimated to be \$30.5 million.

### 4.2.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Response a): No Impact.** Implementation of the RTP entails implementation of project-level improvements as funding permits over the 20-year lifetime of the Plan. The proposed Project would not convert any agricultural lands and would therefore have no significant impact



on Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance. Therefore, there is no impact, and no mitigation is required.

**Response b): No Impact.** The RTP does not challenge any zoning or land use regulations as designated in the 2035 General Plan. The proposed Project would not result in conflicts with any Williamson Act contracts, nor would it result in the cancellation of any Williamson Act contracts. There will be no impact on the Williamson Act contract, therefore no mitigation is required.

**Response c): No Impact.** See responses a) and b) above. The Regional Transportation Plan will have no impact on agricultural resources in Plumas County and will not result in conversion of farmland.

### 4.3. AIR QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?			X	
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 which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?			X	
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

#### 4.3.1. DISCUSSION

The California Air and Resources Board (CARB) divides the State into air basins and adopts standards of quality for each air basin. The North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) is the regional government agency that works to reduce air pollution within the district. The NCUAQMD prepares plans for the attainment and maintenance of Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS), develops and adopts rules, enforces regulations to keep air pollution levels down, and issues permits for stationary

sources of air pollution. The NCUAQMD also regulates agricultural burning, addresses citizen complaints, assesses meteorological conditions, and implements federal and state programs and regulations. The NCUAQMD works to ensure a coordinated approach in the development and implementation of transportation plans throughout the County. This coordination ensures compliance with pertinent provisions of the Federal and California Clean Air Acts, as well as related transportation legislation. Particulate matter 10 (particulate matter ten





microns in diameter or less) or PM<sub>10</sub>, is the only pollutant monitored at the Plumas County monitoring station. PM<sub>10</sub> can come from dust, vehicles exhaust or heating mechanisms, road salt, and conifer pollen, among others. The 24-hour State standard for PM<sub>10</sub> is 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and the Federal standard is 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Plumas County is located within the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (AQMD). The main responsibility of the Northern Sierra AQMD is to achieve and maintain the NAAQS and CAAQs. CARB sets State area designations for 10 criteria pollutants (ozone, suspended particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>), fine suspended particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, sulfates, lead, hydrogen sulfide, and visibility reducing particles) while the U.S. EPA sets Federal area designations for 6 criteria pollutants (ozone, PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and sulfur dioxide).

Plumas County is included in the Mountain Counties Air Basin and is unclassified or in attainment with ozone, PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>, except for the greater Portola area. Air quality in the County is generally good, due to low population density, a limited number of industrial and agricultural installations, and low levels of traffic congestion. On January 15, 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated approximately 150 square miles of the county around Portola as a federal non-attainment area for exceedance of the federal annual standard for PM<sub>2.5</sub> based on air monitoring data from 2011 through 2013. As noted in the 2017 Portola Fine Particulate Matter (2.5) Attainment Plan, Poor air quality in the County is generally attributed to wildland fires, wood stoves, and

open burning and generally not transportation conditions.

Following the non-attainment area designation for PM<sub>2.5</sub> in 2015, CARB approved the Portola Fine Particulate Matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) Attainment Plan in 2017 and subsequently approved the Proposed Portola PM<sub>2.5</sub> Plan Contingency Measure SIP Submittal in the fall of 2020. The predominant source of the PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution in this area is the residential wood combustion from space heating and the unique topographic and meteorological conditions that can trap pollutants near the ground, and not transportation. The district established the Greater Portola Wood Stove Change-Out Program to provide residents incentives to replace their inefficient stoves. According to the 2021 Progress Report, 2021 emission reductions exceeded the 2022 emission reduction goal by 11%.

Some projects within the RTP propose to reduce single occupancy vehicular trips, which would result in a reduction of emissions from vehicles. Therefore, this RTP is consistent with the District's PM<sub>10</sub> Attainment Plan.

The 2035 General Plan defines sensitive receptors as: Sensitive receptors are defined as land uses that typically accommodate sensitive population groups such as long-term health care facilities, rehabilitation centers, retirement homes, convalescent homes, residences, schools, childcare centers, and playgrounds.

#### **4.3.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-e): Less Than Significant.** Many projects outlined within the RTP aim to reduce vehicular trips and promote alternative modes of transportation. However, some projects may have short term effects on air quality,



sensitive receptors, or create odors during construction. These individual projects identified in the RTP will be subject to project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction.

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted Assembly Bill (AB) 32 known as the California Global Warming Solutions Act (Section 38560.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The bill, and subsequent legislation (SB 375) establishes a cap on statewide greenhouse gas emissions and sets forth the regulatory framework to achieve the corresponding reduction in statewide emissions levels.

In January 2007, the Legislature asked the CTC to review the RTP guidelines to incorporate climate change emission reduction measures. The request emphasized that RTPs should utilize models that accurately measure the benefits of land use strategies aimed at reducing vehicle trips and/or trip length. The CTC staff established an RTP guidelines working group to assist in the development of “best practices” for inclusion in the RTP Guidelines. The 2024 RTP Guidelines provide several recommendations for consideration by rural RTPAs to address greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions. The following State and federal strategies have specific application to Plumas County:

- Alignment with performance measurements and asset management
- Alignment with goals and policies for the State’s Climate Action Plan for Transportation Investments (CAPTI)
- Alignment with Planning Practice Examples in Appendix F.
- **Federal: Title 23 CFR Part 450.324(b)** requires

short and long-range strategies for an integrated multimodal transportation system. State: GC Section 65080(a) requires that the RTP shall be directed at achieving a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system.

- **Federal: Title 23 CFR Part 450.324(b)** requires short and long-range strategies for an integrated multimodal transportation system. 23 CFR 450.325(f) (8) is an added requirement for the RTP pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 135 to include consideration of the role that intercity buses play in reducing congestion, pollution, and energy consumption. **State: GC Section 65080(a)** the RTP shall be directed at achieving a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system.
- **Federal: Title 23 CFR Part 450.324(b)** requires short and long-range strategies for an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods. Title 23 CFR Part 450.324(f)(1) states that the RTP shall include the projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the plan, and Title 23 CFR Part 450.324(f)(3) states that the RTP shall include operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods. State: GC Section 65080(a) requires that the RTP shall be directed at achieving a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system.
- **Federal: Title 23 U.S.C. Section 134 and Title 23 CFR Part 450.324(f)(5)** requires strategies for improving the regional transportation system and reducing congestion.



- **Federal: Title 23 CFR Part 450.206(a)(3)** states the planning process will address the security of the transportation system for the public. Title 23 CFR Part 450.216(c) states that the CTP shall reference, summarize, or contain any applicable emergency relief and disaster preparedness plans, strategies and policies that support homeland security and safeguard the personal security of all motorized and non-motorized users. RTPAs shall also comply.
- **Federal: 23 CFR 450.324(f)(7)** The RTP may consider projects and strategies that address areas or corridors where current or projected deficiencies threatens the efficient functioning of key elements of the metropolitan area's transportation system.
- **State: Public Resources Code, Section 21000, et seq.** Rural RTPAs have a unique set of challenges compared to urbanized areas to reduce regional transportation related GHG emissions. Lower land use densities, limited transit options, and higher VMT per household contribute to the challenges to reduce these emissions. More efficient vehicles and low-carbon fuels present the highest payoff for rural counties to reduce transportation related carbon dioxide emissions. Nonetheless Final 2024 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for RTPAs 120 rural RTPAs should strive to incorporate strategies to reduce their GHG emissions during their planning process. RTPAs that are not located within a boundary of an MPO are not subject to the provisions of SB 375, or the resultant requirements to address regional GHG targets in their RTPs. This includes the requirement to prepare a SCS to meet a regional GHG emissions reduction target. It is suggested that in preparing the environmental document for their RTP, RTPAs ensure that any GHG emissions during

either construction or, as a result of the project, be addressed and mitigated, as appropriate.

- **Federal: 23 CFR 450.306; 23 CFR 450.324(f)(3) & (4); 23 CFR 450.340(e) & (f)** It is important to note that failure to consider any factor specified in the Performance- Based Approach, 23 CFR 450.306 (d), shall not be reviewable by any court under Title 23 U.S.C., 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, Subchapter II of Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 5, or Title 5 U.S.C. Chapter 7 in any matter affecting an RTP, TIP, a project or strategy, or the certification of a metropolitan transportation planning process. The FHWA maintains a Performance Based Planning and Programming Guidebook to help identify potential packages of strategies to achieve performance-based objectives, as well as the data and tools used to determine which strategies may be most effective, available at: [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance\\_based\\_planning/pbpp\\_guidebook/page06.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/performance_based_planning/pbpp_guidebook/page06.cfm)

The following strategies from the previous RTP guidelines had specific application to Plumas County.

- For purposes of allocating transportation investments, recognize the rural contribution towards GHG reduction for counties that have policies that support development within their cities, and protect agriculture and resource lands. Consideration should be given to jurisdictions that contribute towards these goals for projects that reduce GHG or are GHG neutral, such as safety, rehabilitation, connectivity and for alternative modes.
- In setting priorities, consider transportation projects that increase efficiency, connectivity and/or accessibility or provide other means to reduce GHG.
- In setting priorities, consider transportation projects



that provide public health co-benefits.

- Emphasize transportation investments in areas where desired land uses as indicated in the County General Plan may result in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction or other lower impact use.
- Employ “Fix It First” policies to ensure that preventive maintenance and repair of existing transit and roads are the highest priority for spending, to reduce overall maintenance costs, and to support development in existing centers and corridors.

The transportation planning literature recognizes three interrelated components that contribute to transportation emissions reductions. Those components include changes in vehicle technology (cleaner burning engines), alternative fuel sources, and vehicle use. The first two components are typically the responsibility of industry and national governmental interests. RTPAs and local governments can affect vehicle use by promoting transportation alternatives to the automobile, and by managing the demand for transportation. These efforts typically involve goals and policies and/or projects and programs focused on getting people out of their cars and into non-auto modes of travel (mode shifting).

RTPAs that are not located within the boundaries of a Metropolitan Planning Organization, which includes PCTC, are not subject to the provisions of SB 375 which require addressing regional GHG targets in the RTP and preparation of a Sustainable Communities Strategy. Future improvements to the transit system and a commitment to a future rideshare program could provide residents another alternative to driving a car.

The following RTP goals are established for Plumas County to increase safety while reducing dependence on the automobile and to promote mode shifting to other forms of transportation.

- Goal 1: Maintain a safe, efficient, roadway system.
- Goal 2: Encourage a safe and convenient non-motorized transportation system.
- Goal 3: Support an effective and accessible public transportation system.
- Goal 6: Ensure sensitivity to the environment in all transportation decisions.
- Goal 7: Include state climate change strategies in transportation investment decisions.
- Goal 8: Ensure that Tribal residents within the Plumas region to have safe, effective, functional transportation systems, including streets, roads pedestrian and bicycle facilities and transit

The effectiveness of efforts by the RTPA to provide transportation alternatives and to implement Transportation Demand Model (TDM) and Transportation System Management (TSM) policies and strategies can be measured in terms of reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or the expected growth in VMT. VMT reductions correlate directly with reductions in GHG emissions.

Caltrans reports VMT by County on an annual basis. The daily vehicle miles traveled on County roads decreased by 64 miles between 2017 and 2021, or an average of a 4% decrease every year. Federally maintained US Forest Service roads decreased from 52.7 daily VMT in 2017 to 36.5 daily VMT in 2021. Additionally, State Highways decreased an average of 1% daily VMT.

The Plumas County 2025 RTP recognizes that non-auto mobility options, including walking, biking and transit, require coordinated land use decisions and improved infrastructure. The goals and policies in the RTP are consistent with the County's proposed General Plan revisions to provide a balanced multi-modal transportation system that includes non-auto choices for access and mobility. The County is committed to implementing these types of policies and strategies that reduce reliance on the automobile and contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions. Although the RTP mentions projects that will enhance the countywide transportation system, the proposed improvements would not influence VMT or population levels, nor would it significantly alter current air quality levels. As such, the proposed Project would result in less than significant impacts to air quality, and no mitigation is required.

Vehicles Miles Traveled (VMT), 2017-2021					
Place	2017 Daily VMT	2018 Daily VMT	2020 Daily VMT	2021 Daily VMT	Annual Avg. Change
Portola	20.75	14.82	14.19	13.16	-7%
Plumas County	363.06	327.88	255.43	299.22	-4%
Bureau Of Indian Affairs	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0%
State Highways	434.76	429.28	395.70	406.26	-1%
State Park Service	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03	10%
U.S. Forest Service	52.76	28.78	23.28	36.52	-6%
Source: California Public Road Data 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021					

Forecasted Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)					
Place	2021 Daily VMT	2026 Daily VMT	2031 Daily VMT	2036 Daily VMT	2041 Daily VMT
Portola	13.16	10.73	8.75	7.13	5.82
Plumas County	299.22	256.95	220.65	189.48	162.71
Bureau Of Indian Affairs	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
State Highways	406.26	386.35	367.41	349.41	332.28
State Park Service	0.03	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.08
U.S. Forest Service	36.52	29.78	24.28	19.80	16.14
Total	755.20	683.86	621.15	565.89	517.05
Source: California Public Road Data 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021					



## 4.4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
c) Have a substantial 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?			X	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			X	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?			X	



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#### **4.4.1. DISCUSSION**

Plumas County is comprised of a range of habitat types many of which influence the water quality and quantity of the Feather River Watershed. These habitats, or vegetation communities, provide food, shelter, movement corridors, and breeding opportunities for a variety of wildlife species, many unique to the Feather River Watershed and the larger Sierra Mountain region. Conifer (including mixed conifer) habitat types comprise approximately 72% of land coverage in the County and are habitats commonly found at higher elevations. Plant characteristics of this habitat include a variety of pines and firs. Farther away from the higher elevation Sierra regions of the County, the pines and firs give way to sagebrush, annual grasslands, and the freshwater emergent wetland habitat types more common at lower elevations.

Plumas County and the Feather River Watershed contain a variety of aquatic habitats. Within the Feather River Watershed, two types of fisheries are found: cold water river/stream species and warm water lake/reservoir species. Historically, the Watershed was habitat to Chinook salmon and steelhead. Special-status species are plants or animals that are legally protected under the State and/or federal Endangered Species Acts (ESAs) or other regulations, and species that are considered by the scientific community to be sufficiently rare to qualify for such listing. The California Department of Fish and Game has documented habitat for over 90 different species of special concern in the County. These include several amphibians, such as the red-legged frog, bald eagles, osprey, several mammals, and plant/wildlife species associated with wetland habitats.

#### **State Wildlife Action Plan**

The goals identified in the Policy Element (Chapter 3) of the RTP consider stressors identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan. The State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies separate conservational provinces broken into subzones called ecoregions by the SWAP. Plumas County is included in the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Province.

The SWAP identifies sensitive species, habitat stressors, and suggested conservation goals and actions for each of the ecoregions in California. According to the SWAP, the major stressors within Plumas County are as follows:

- Agricultural and forestry effluents
- Annual and perennial non-timber crops
- Climate change
- Commercial and industrial areas
- Dams and water management/use
- Fire and fire suppression
- Household sewage and urban wastewater
- Housing and urban areas
- Industrial and military effluents
- Introduced genetic material
- Invasive plants/animals
- Livestock, farming, and ranching
- Logging and wood harvesting
- Marine and freshwater aquaculture
- Mining and quarrying
- Parasites/pathogens/diseases



- Recreational activities
- Renewable energy
- Roads and railroads
- Tourism and recreation areas
- Utility and service lines

### **Recreational activities**

The California State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) was not developed on a county-basis. The larger region that applies to Plumas County contains some species, stressors and recommended actions that do not pertain to Plumas County as the region encompasses a larger geographic area. However, this consultation with the SWAP is mandatory and still provides relevant information. For a complete list of actions suggested for wildlife management in Plumas County, see Attachment C of the RTP.

### **California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB)**

A review was performed of county-wide species using the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The information in the species list includes known occurrences and historical occurrences of species listed as threatened, endangered or otherwise protected under policies or ordinances at the local or regional level as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, §15380). Because the RTP does not propose to expand the capacity of the existing transportation network and includes mostly reconstruction and rehabilitation projects, it is not anticipated to impact threatened or endangered species.

### **4.4.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Response a-f): Less than Significant.** The proposed Project does not propose the construction of any new roadways. Rehabilitation efforts make up most projects identified in the RTP, which would not disturb any new ground as they would occur on existing roadways. Any project identified in the RTP would go through project-specific environmental review to ensure that no sensitive areas or species would be harmed. The maintenance and rehabilitation projects in Plumas County would not have an adverse effect on any candidate species identified in the SWAP, nor would it have any adverse effect on any riparian habitat, sensitive natural community or protected wetland identified in the County. The Plan would not interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with any wildlife corridors. The RTP would not conflict with any local protections, nor would it conflict with any conservation plans. Therefore, the current RTP as a plan would not impact biological resources, wetland resources, or conflict with any habitat conservation plan or local ordinance protecting natural and biological resources. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.



## 4.5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?			X	
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?			X	
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?			X	
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			X	

### 4.5.1. DISCUSSION

Plumas County has a uniquely rich historic and prehistoric heritage. According to the Native American Heritage Commission, there are several active Native American Tribes in the area which include the following:

- Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria
- Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians
- Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians
- Susanville Indian Rancheria
- Tsi Akim Maidu
- United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Each Tribal entity was contacted during the RTP development process to discuss transportation deficiencies, improvements to existing system infrastructure, and mode specific projects. Additionally, Tribes were sent AB-52 consultation letters prior to the publishing of this Initial Study. Euro-American travel through the County and its later settlement are also of interest and importance to the people of Plumas County, for the County's identity is closely related to these historic events.

The land now known as the Plumas National Forest has been used by humans for at least the last 8,000 years. Indigenous peoples, including the Maidu, Paiute and Washoe were the original caretakers of the land. Spanish exploration of northern California was limited to the



Sacramento Valley, but the Hudson Bay Fur Company had entered the region by the early 1830s. For the most part, the ruggedness of the terrain discouraged European exploration until the Gold Rush.

The Mountain Maidu is the Tribal group whose people were present in Plumas County when European migrants started to settle. Depending on what source is relied upon, the Mountain Maidu people have lived in various locations in Plumas County from hundreds to thousands of years and still do today. Other Tribes, such as the Washoe and the Paiute, most likely utilized the area while not settling permanently. When weather permitted, the Maidu maintained permanent villages along the timbered edges of glacial valleys. From early spring to late fall, smaller groups traveled to the upper Sierra ridge tops and valleys, setting up open air brush shelters. Villages were occupied during winter months and relied mostly on stored and preserved food. The Mountain Maidu people most likely existed in small, scattered, familial groups in the valleys of Plumas County.

Their existence was suddenly disturbed in the spring of 1850 when a flood of gold-seeking miners poured into the canyons and valleys of the region in search of a fabled “Gold” Lake. Overnight, mining camps sprang to life. Rivers diverted and ditches were dug to bring water from distant sources to the diggings.

#### **4.5.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Response a-d): Less than Significant.** The proposed Project does not entitle, propose, or otherwise require the construction of new roadways. The proposed Project includes a variety of roadway improvement projects, which consist primarily of roadway rehabilitation efforts and roadway safety improvements. The proposed Project identifies roadway and multimodal transportation improvement funding priorities that will be implemented over the next 20 years. Nearly all of the roadway projects identified in the RTP consist of rehabilitation efforts, which would occur within the roadbeds of the existing roadways and would not have the potential to impact any known or previously undiscovered cultural resources. Individual projects identified in the RTP would be subject to project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction of the improvements. This future project-level environmental review of individual projects would identify the potential for impacts to any cultural, historical, paleontological or archaeological resources including human remains or cultural artifacts. A project level environmental review is required under CEQA for each project identified in the Regional Transportation Plan and will be evaluated at that time for cultural resources. This Plan as a Project has a less than significant impact on the environment and no mitigation is required.





## 4.6. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
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 Special Publication 42.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
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?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?			X	



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#### 4.6.1. DISCUSSION

Plumas County is located in an area of varying topography and slopes, with elevations ranging from approximately 1,800 feet in the Feather River Canyon to 8,300 feet near the summit of Mount Ingalls. Rates of erosion are contingent on a number of factors, including the type of soil material and structure, slope, water runoff, and levels of human activity. Rates of erosion are contingent on several factors, including the type of soil material and structure, slope, water runoff and levels of human activity. Overall, the County is primarily characterized as having a moderate potential for soil erosion. Areas classified as having a low and high potential for erosion are also found in the County, with a fairly significant portion of the County unclassified or not mapped. Areas with a high potential for erosion coincide with locations located at higher elevations in the County.

The risk of seismic hazards in Plumas County is based on the approximate location of earthquake faults within and outside of the County. Several potentially active faults pass through Plumas County, which includes the Almanor Fault, Butt Creek Fault Zone, and the Mohawk Valley Fault. The Indian Valley Fault is also considered an active fault located within the County. Additionally, the Honey Lake and Fort Sage Faults are two active faults located east of the County. Although several faults are within and near the County, seismic hazard mapping indicates that the County has low seismic hazard potential. Additionally, the County is not located within a delineated Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The risks associated with earthquakes, such as surface fault rupture, within the County are considered low.

#### 4.6.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-e): Less than Significant.** Seismicity is directly related to the distribution of fault systems within a region. Depending on activity patterns, faults and fault-related geologic features may be classified as active, potentially active, or inactive. The entire State of California is considered seismically active and is susceptible to seismic ground shaking, however, the most highly active fault zones are along coastal areas.

##### Fault Rupture

Ruptures to the fault line can occur due to earthquakes or fault creeps. The Alquist-Priolo Fault Zoning Act requires active earthquake fault zones to be mapped and it provides special development considerations within these zones. While Plumas County could be affected by distant earthquakes, there are no Alquist-Priolo Fault zones within the region.

##### Seismic Ground Shaking

Some possibility of seismic ground shaking in California is expected. Due to this expectation, California requires special design considerations for all structural improvements in accordance with the seismic design provisions in the California Building Code. These seismic design provisions require enhanced structural integrity based on several risk parameters. Any future roadway improvements implemented as a result of adoption of the RTP would be subject to detailed engineering review at each project-specific level to ensure that the structural integrity is consistent with state requirements. As such, implementation of the proposed RTP as a



Project would result in a less than significant impact from seismic ground shaking.

### **Liquefaction**

Liquefaction typically requires a significant sudden decrease of shearing resistance in cohesionless soils and a sudden increase in water pressure, which is typically associated with an earthquake of high magnitude. The potential for liquefaction is highest when groundwater levels are high, and loose, fine, sandy soils occur at depths of less than 50 feet. Most areas of Plumas County are at a low risk of hazards from liquefaction. Any future roadway improvements implemented as a result of adoption of the RTP would be subject to detailed engineering requirements to ensure structural integrity consistent with the requirements of state law. As such, implementation of the proposed Project would result in a less than significant impact from liquefaction.

### **Landslides**

Landslides include rockfalls, deep slope failure, and shallow slope failure. Factors such as the geological conditions, drainage, slope, vegetation, and others directly affect the potential for landslides. A common trigger for landslides results from the construction of new roadways. Most roadway projects identified in the RTP consist of maintenance or repair of existing facilities, and no new roadways are proposed in the 2025 RTP. Furthermore, any future roadway improvements implemented as a result of adoption of the RTP would be subject to detailed project-level review. Therefore, the potential for landslides is considered less than significant.

### **Lateral Spreading.**

Lateral spreading typically results when ground shaking moves soil toward an area where the soil integrity is weak or unsupported, and it typically occurs on the surface of a slope, although it does not occur strictly on steep slopes. Oftentimes, lateral spreading is directly associated with areas of liquefaction. However, any future roadway improvements implemented as a result of adoption of the RTP would be subject to detailed project-level review. Therefore, the potential of impact from lateral spreading is considered less than significant.

### **Erosion**

Erosion naturally occurs on the surface of the earth as surface materials (i.e. rock, soil, debris, etc.) is loosened, dissolved, or worn away, and transported from one place to another by gravity. Two common types of soil erosion include wind erosion and water erosion. The steepness of a slope is an important factor that affects soil erosion. Erosion potential in soils is influenced primarily by loose soil texture and steep slopes. Loose soils can be eroded by water or wind forces, whereas soils with high clay content are generally susceptible only to water erosion. The potential for erosion generally increases as a result of human activity, primarily through the development of facilities and impervious surfaces and the removal of vegetative cover. There are no new roadways proposed in the RTP, and any projects implemented from the RTP will go through project-level review and analysis. Therefore, the potential for erosion is considered less than significant.



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## **Expansive Soils**

There are no expansive soils in Plumas County that have a moderate to high swelling capacity, and most of the area does not have any expansive soils. Expansive soils are those that shrink or swell with the change in moisture content. The volume of change is influenced by the quantity of moisture, by the kind and amount of clay in the soil, and by the original porosity of the soil. Shrinking and swelling can damage roads and structures unless special engineering design is incorporated into the project plans. There are no new roadways proposed in the RTP, and any projects implemented from the RTP will go through project-level review and analysis. Therefore, the potential for new expansive soil issues is considered less than significant.

## **Septic Tanks**

Implementation of the RTP would not result in the use or expansion of any septic systems. Implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic, and no mitigation is required.



## 4.7. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?			X	

### 4.7.1. DISCUSSION

The RTP includes goals, policies, and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in Plumas County. These goals and policies largely consist of methods to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), which is the main source of GHG emissions for transportation. 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 or County roads as they are simply maintaining the current system. Keeping all roadways open through maintenance can help to avoid increases in VMT and therefore GHGs due to taking longer alternative routes.

The RTP is consistent with the all County 2035 General Plan updates and County land use guidelines within the 2035 General Plan and will encourage infill development and strategic planning to assist in VMT reduction and shorter

travel distances. Additionally, the RTP includes bicycle and pedestrian projects, and transit projects aimed at enabling travelers to utilize alternative modes of transportation. By expanding alternative forms of transportation and not including capacity-enhancing projects, Plumas County is in line with statewide climate change goals.

### 4.7.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Response a) and b): Less than Significant.** According to the US Census, the population in Plumas County has decreased from 20,007 to 19,790 over the past decade. The Department of Finances projection calculator anticipates population to decrease to 14,419 by 2045. As a result of the County's projected population decrease, increases in VMT are anticipated to remain low as well. The RTP includes numerous goals related to the increase in multi-modal transportation options, which reduce dependence on the automobile, and may subsequently result in decreases in total VMT throughout the County.



## 4.8. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which 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?				X
e) For a Project 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, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?			X	
f) For a Project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the Project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the Project area?			X	
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where			X	



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#### 4.8.1. DISCUSSION

The State of California has adopted U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations for the intrastate movement of hazardous materials; State regulations are contained in Title 26 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). In addition, the State of California regulates the transportation of hazardous waste originating in the state and passing through the state (26 CCR). Both regulatory programs apply in California. The two State agencies with primary responsibility for enforcing Federal and State regulations and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies are the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and Caltrans. The CHP enforces hazardous material and hazardous waste labeling and packing regulations to prevent leakage and spills of material in transit. Caltrans has emergency chemical spill identification teams throughout the State that can respond quickly in the event of a spill.

#### 4.8.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-c): No Impact.** The RTP does not propose any new roadways to be constructed, and any potential use of hazardous substances used through construction equipment would be properly assessed and mitigated before any projects are constructed. No hazardous materials will be transported or used within one quarter mile radius of any schools. Furthermore, any specific project from the RTP would be evaluated for these conditions at a specific project-level basis before construction. Implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

**Responses d): Less than Significant.** There are no locations in Plumas County that are registered with the Department of Toxic Substances Control and included on the Cortese List. Furthermore, any specific project from the RTP would be evaluated on a specific project-level basis. Implementation of the proposed Project would have no impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

**Response e-f): Less than Significant.** The Action Element of the RTP includes a list of proposed improvement projects related to aviation facilities in the County. The proposed aviation facility improvements consist primarily of rehabilitation efforts, and the implementation of other ancillary improvements such as fencing and lighting. All improvements to aviation facilities within the County identified in the RTP are consistent with the applicable airport land use plans (ALUPs) and would not result in changes to the aviation and flight patterns surrounding County aviation facilities. Furthermore, any specific project from the RTP would be evaluated on a specific project-level basis. Implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

**Response g): Less than Significant.** The proposed Project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The improvements identified in the RTP would improve the transportation network in Plumas County, which would serve to improve emergency response times countywide. Construction activities associated with projects identified within the



RTP may result in temporary lane closures that may temporarily impede emergency access to certain areas within the County during construction. However, each improvement project, when undertaken, will include measures to allow safe passage whenever possible. Any specific project from the RTP would be evaluated on a specific project-level basis. Implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

**Response h): Less than Significant.** Wildfires are a major hazard in the State of California and in Plumas County. Wildfires burn natural vegetation on developed and undeveloped lands and include timber, brush, woodland, and grass fires. While low intensity wildfires have an important role in the ecosystem, modern wildfires are exacerbated due to fire suppression, extreme drought and climate change. These higher intensity fires put human health and safety, structures (e.g., homes, schools, businesses, etc.), air quality, recreation areas, water quality, wildlife habitat and ecosystem health, and forest resources at risk. Most populated areas in Plumas County are considered to be in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). This leaves communities at a higher level of risk as they are more exposed to wildland fires. Emergency protocols of such nature are included in the Plumas County Emergency Operations Plan.

The proposed Project consists primarily of projects that will improve and rehabilitate roadways throughout the County. Roadway rehabilitation is necessary for improving emergency response and evacuation efficiency. There

are no new homes, businesses or habitable structures proposed as part of the RTP. Therefore, implementation of the proposed Project would not result in increased risks associated with wildfires. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.



## 4.9. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?			X	
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially 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 which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?			X	
c) Substantially 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 which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?			X	
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?			X	
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?			X	
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?			X	
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?			X	
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?			X	
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?			X	
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?			X	



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#### **4.9.1. DISCUSSION**

Plumas County contains several rivers, lakes, and reservoirs, which provide important habitat, recreation, water supply and economic functions. The amount of precipitation received throughout the watershed varies but greatly contributes to the significant amount of water available in the County and throughout the region. The Sierra Crest, centrally located within Plumas County, acts as a barrier to storm systems between the western and eastern portions of the County. The western side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains receives over 90 inches of precipitation annually while the area east of the Sierra Crest receives only 11 inches. Snowpack levels in the County's higher elevation areas serve as natural water reservoirs for surface water that becomes available as the snow melts and drains into the regional waterway system.

The Upper Feather River Watershed covers a majority of the County (98%), which is about 72% of the watershed. The tributaries of the Upper Feather River Watershed drain over 2 million acres of land in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, flowing southwest into Lake Oroville in neighboring Butte County. The Upper Feather River Watershed is divided into four main branches with respective watersheds: the West Branch, the North Fork, the Middle Fork and the South Fork of the Feather River. The North Fork Feather River drainage area is the largest drainage area in the watershed covering approximately 1.4 million acres and contributing a yearly average flow of over 2.3 million acre-feet of water to Lake Oroville. The South Fork Feather River drainage is the smallest of the four drainage areas and contributes an average of over 189,000 acre-feet to Lake Oroville each year. The Upper

Feather River watershed serves as an important supply of surface water resources. Water has been a valuable export from Plumas County since the State Water project (SWP) located its main storage facility fed by the Feather River at Lake Oroville. This watershed supplies 3.2 million acre-feet per year for downstream urban, industrial and agricultural use as part of the State Water project and delivers water to 29 agencies. The State Water project also operates three reservoirs in Plumas County; Antelope Lake, Frenchman Lake and Lake Davis, which flow into Lake Oroville. The main stems of the Upper Feather River Watershed in addition to many of the tributaries exhibit some level of degradation, primarily due to human activities. The east side of the County experiences much more erosion than the west side, which greatly affects surface water quality. Timber harvesting, water diversion, irrigation practices, road and railroad construction, grazing and mining have all contributed to in-stream water quality issues, such as increased sediment transport, that impact aquatic life and riparian vegetation.

Plumas County contains fourteen groundwater basins, which are primarily located in the valleys on the east side of the Sierra Crest. Sierra Valley is the largest groundwater basin, covering 125,250 acres, and underlies the Middle Fork of the Feather River. The smallest groundwater basin is Yellow Creek Valley Groundwater Basin covering 2,310 acres. Some of the County's groundwater basins have been depleted as a result of high extraction rates and slow recharge. For example, the Sierra Valley Groundwater Basin has experienced significant declines due to human activity and agricultural practices.





Groundwater quality is currently monitored in nine of the County's groundwater basins. Groundwater quality in the County varies by basin. Water quality in the Sierra Valley basin is primarily affected by geothermal activity which causes the groundwater to contain high concentrations of boron, fluoride, iron and sodium. Some wells within the Sierra Valley Sub-Basin also exhibit high levels of arsenic and manganese. Localized groundwater quality has been influenced in some areas by the use of septic systems.

#### **4.9.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Response a-j): Less than Significant.** Implementation of the proposed Project would indirectly result in the improvement and rehabilitation of roadways and transportation infrastructure throughout Plumas County. The Project would not result in the development or construction of housing or other habitable structures that would be at risk from flooding events and no new roadways would be developed. There are a small number of projects identified within the RTP that may increase the area of impervious surfaces within the County. Such improvements consist primarily of repaving or roadway widening to address safety and operational concerns. The RTP would not substantially alter existing drainage, nor would it contribute to runoff water. The RTP would not degrade the water quality, nor would it place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area. As such, the Project would not result in an increased demand for ground or surface water resources and would have no impact on these environmental resources.

There is the potential for water quality impacts to occur during construction activities associated with the various

projects identified in the RTP. Each project is subject to further project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction. During subsequent environmental review, potential project-specific construction impacts to water quality would be identified, and mitigation measures, in the form of Best Management Practices would be identified and implemented to ensure that impacts to water quality are reduced or avoided. Impacts to the hydrology and water quality are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.



## 4.10. LAND USE AND PLANNING

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
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?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X

### 4.10.1. DISCUSSION

Plumas County has a 2035 General Plan containing policies to guide growth and land use changes.

### 4.10.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-c): No Impact.** Implementation of the proposed Project would result in improvements to the County's transportation network, and there are no proposed changes to land uses or land use designations in the RTP. The RTP is consistent with the 2035 County General Plan, and no housing would be affected, nor would any new roadways be constructed. Furthermore, any projects implemented as a result of the RTP would go through a more detailed project-level analysis. Implementation of the RTP would not conflict with a habitat conservation plan. There are no impacts to land use associated with the proposed Project and no mitigation is required.



## 4.11. MINERAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
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?				X

### 4.11.1. DISCUSSION

The Office of Mine Reclamation periodically publishes a list of mines regulated under Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) that is generally referred to as the AB 3098 List. The Public Contract Code precludes mining operations that are not on the AB 3098 List from selling sand, gravel, aggregates, or other mined materials to state or local agencies. The current AB 3098 list (August 19, 2024) indicates that there are 9 mines regulated under SMARA in Plumas County:

- 91-32-0002 CHESTER PIT 1
- 91-32-0015 SOPER PIT SPANISH CREEK & GRAVEL
- 91-32-0017 BLASTED ROCK QUARRY RICK JOY
- 91-32-0018 SLOAT PIT SIERRA PACIFIC INDUSTRIES
- 91-32-0019 CHESTER PIT #2/SOUTH Sierra Cascade Aggregate & Asphalt Products, Inc
- 91-32-0032 SPARROCK BAR ONE QUARRY RICK JOY, 91-32-0035 PITCHFORK - GOSS PIT (PKA SIERRA SANDS) FEATHER RIVER MATERIALS, INC.

- 91-32-0037 LOWER SOPER PIT SPANISH CREEK & GRAVEL, LLC, and
- 91-32-0039 INDIAN VALLEY ROCK TURNER EXCAVATING INC.

### 4.11.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Response a-b): No Impact.** There are no active mines that would be affected by the RTP. The proposed Project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or mineral resource recovery site. Implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact, therefore no mitigation is required.

## 4.12. NOISE

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
e) For a project 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, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

### 4.12.1. DISCUSSION

The dominant sources of noise in Plumas County are mobile, related to automobile and truck traffic, aircraft and train transportation. Stationary sources in the county include power plants, lumber mills and aggregate mining and processing facilities. To a smaller extent, construction sites are also considered a stationary source of short-term, or temporary, noise in the County.

### 4.12.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-f): Less than Significant.** Implementation of the proposed Project consists primarily of improvements to the existing transportation network in Plumas County. There are no new roadways proposed that would introduce new vehicle trips into areas not currently



exposed to mobile noise sources from the existing transportation network. The improvements identified in the RTP would not directly result in increased vehicle trips on the County roadway network and would therefore not result in increased noise levels from vehicles travelling on existing roadways and transportation facilities in the County. Any noise disturbances to people or animals due to construction activities would be temporary, and subsequent environmental review of project-specific impacts would be required prior to approval and implementation of future improvements to ensure that sensitive species are not disturbed. This review would propose temporary mitigations to sensitive receptors and assign mitigation measures as needed to reduce noise impacts. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.



## 4.13. POPULATION AND HOUSING

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	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)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	

### 4.13.1. DISCUSSION

According to the US Census Bureau American Community Survey, the total number of housing units in Plumas County was estimated at 15,396 in 2020. An estimated 74.3% of the housing units were owner-occupied. The median home value in the County is \$310,100.

According to the US Census, the population of Plumas County population in the County is 19,790, a decrease since the last census recording in 2010 of 20,007. Furthermore, Plumas County has seasonal population increases that are directly related to the region's recreational tourism industry. Transportation planning efforts must accommodate the seasonal population boosts.

### 4.13.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-c): Less than Significant.** The Plumas County region is not undergoing any major development or construction that would significantly alter the population. The proposed Project consists primarily of the rehabilitation of the existing transportation network in Plumas County. There are no new roadways proposed that would extend vehicular access into areas of the County that are not currently accessible by area roadways. The Project would not result in the direct or indirect inducement of population growth. The RTP includes projects that would occur primarily within the right-of-way of the existing transportation network and would not displace any persons or housing units. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.



## 4.14. PUBLIC SERVICES

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, 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:			X	
Fire protection?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?			X	
Parks?			X	
Other public facilities?			X	

### 4.14.1. DISCUSSION

Plumas County has 19 different fire districts, the U.S. Forest Service and CAL FIRE that provide fire protection services. Not all populated areas are located within an established fire district that provides structural fire protection. The U.S. Forest Service provides the majority of wildland fire suppression; however, structural fire protection responsibility lies with local Fire Districts located throughout the county. Law enforcement for the County is provided by the Plumas County Sheriff's Office, located in Quincy. The California Highway Patrol enforces traffic laws throughout the county.

Plumas Unified School District and Plumas County Office

of Education serve the students in the 2,613 square miles through four elementary schools, three comprehensive high schools, and eight alternative education sites, which include: Chester Elementary School, Chester Jr./Sr. High School, Greenville Elementary, Greenville High School, Quincy Elementary, Quincy Jr./Sr. High School, C. Roy Carmichael Elementary, Portola Jr./Sr. High School, and Feather River Adult School

The Central Plumas Recreation and Park District was formed by a voter mandate in 1953. The district is dedicated to providing a wide variety of recreation and park opportunities to the residents of Quincy, Meadow Valley, and the outlying areas located within its political boundaries.



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#### **4.14.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTION**

**Response a): Less than Significant.** The proposed Project (adoption of the RTP) consists primarily of the rehabilitation and improvement of the existing transportation network in Plumas County. The projects included in the RTP would not construct any new roadways into areas not already accessible and would not have an impact on population change. As such, the RTP would not create a demand for increased public services, including police protection, fire protection, schools, parks and other public. Furthermore, every project included in the RTP will be analyzed at a project-specific level to verify this. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.



## 4.15. RECREATION

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	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?			X	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?			X	

### 4.15.1. DISCUSSION

With a majority of the County consisting of open space land use, the County provides a variety of opportunities for recreational activities. Park and recreation facilities include both public and privately managed facilities, with several key parks, recreation areas, and wildlife viewing areas Residents and visitors alike enjoy a range of festivals, picnics, concerts and events related to local history throughout the year.

not have an impact on population change. Furthermore, every project included in the RTP will be analyzed at a project-specific level to verify this. As such, the demand for increased recreational facilities would not increase as a result of implementation of the proposed Project. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

### 4.15.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-b): Less than Significant.** The proposed Project (adoption of the RTP) consists primarily of the rehabilitation and improvement of the existing transportation network in Plumas County. The projects included in the RTP would not construct any new roadways into areas not already accessible and would

## 4.16. TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?			X	
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?			X	
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?			X	
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?			X	



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#### 4.16.1. DISCUSSION

Plumas County is served by local roadways and six major State Highways: SR-36, SR-49, SR-70, SR-89, SR-147, and SR-284. The roadway network provides the regional transportation routes for automobiles and trucks. Other roadways with similar functional classifications as the state highways in Plumas County include Interstate and U.S. Highways. Neither of these roadway types are located directly in Plumas County, but they serve as a route option for travelers in the surrounding region. Forest roads are also present in the County and are described in more detail below.

#### 4.16.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-b): Less than Significant.** The Project is the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan, which is a plan developed to guide transportation investments for all modes of transportation through goals, policies and proposed projects. It establishes vehicle miles traveled (VMT) standards established by the Plumas County Transportation Commission for the County's roads and highways. It also includes policies regarding public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and airports. As such, there is no conflict as the RTP is the guiding transportation plan for the region. The RTP is also consistent with the Circulation Element of the 2035 General Plan and would not result in conflicts or inconsistencies with that plan. Therefore, there is no impact, and no mitigation is required. Implementation of the proposed RTP would result in improvements and rehabilitation to the existing transportation and roadway network in Plumas County.

Although a slight increase in VMT is likely to occur throughout the lifetime of this RTP, few changes are

expected in the ratings of state routes in Plumas County. In 2045, most highway segments are expected to be operating at an acceptable congestion rating.

Implementation of the proposed Project would not result in population growth within Plumas County and would not directly result in increases of VMT. The proposed Project would improve traffic flows and operations throughout the County and would not result in VMT that exceeds applicable standards or thresholds. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**Responses c-f): Less than Significant.** As described throughout this Initial Study, implementation of the proposed Project would assist in the improvement of the County's transportation network across all modes of transit and transportation. The improvements proposed to aviation facilities in the County would not result in an increase in flights or a change in flight patterns. There are policies and programs included in the RTP that would improve public access to transit systems and alternative modes of transportation, such as bicycle use, and the RTP does not conflict with any existing plans to improve active transportation or transit. The various roadway improvements identified in the RTP would assist in the delivery of emergency services by improving the local and regional roadway network and reducing existing design and safety hazards. The RTP and the projects included within were developed after careful review of the 2035 General Plan of the County. The RTP is consistent with the Circulation Element of the 2035 General Plan and would not result in conflicts or inconsistencies with the above referenced plan. This is considered a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.



## 4.17. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:				
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of the Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k), or			X	
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American Tribe.			X	



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#### 4.17.1. DISCUSSION

There are several active Native American Tribal Governments in Plumas County, as verified by the Native American Heritage Commission, including: Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria, Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians, Mooretown Rancheria of Maidu Indians, Susanville Indian Rancheria, Tsi Akim Maidu, United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California.

During the RTP planning process, Tribal representatives were directly contacted by phone and email prior to the mailing of consultation letters to solicit feedback on the RTP. Additionally, Tribal contacts were included in all stakeholder outreach communication and were invited to all community events.

#### 4.17.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Response a-b): Less than Significant.** CEQA requires lead agencies to determine if a proposed Project would have a significant effect on tribal cultural resources. The CEQA Guidelines define tribal cultural resources as: (1) a site, feature, place, cultural landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American Tribe that is listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources, or on a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k); or (2) a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant according to the historical register criteria in Public Resources Code Section 5024.1(c), and considering the significance of the resource to a

California Native American Tribe. The County provides notices of projects under AB52 to the designated contact of, or a tribal representative of, traditionally and culturally affiliated California Native American tribes that have requested notice.

The proposed Project does not entitle, propose, or otherwise require the construction of new roadways. The proposed Project includes a variety of roadway improvement projects, which consist primarily of roadway rehabilitation efforts and roadway safety improvements. The proposed Project identifies roadway and multimodal transportation improvement funding priorities that will be implemented over the next 20 years. Nearly all of the roadway projects identified in the RTP consist of rehabilitation efforts, which would occur within the roadbeds of the existing roadways and would not have the potential to impact any known or previously undiscovered cultural resources. Individual projects identified in the RTP that may include the widening of a roadway or any other projects that would require excavation at previously undisturbed sites would be subject to project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction of the improvements. This future project-level environmental review of individual projects would identify the potential for impacts to any cultural resources. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

## 4.18. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?			X	
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?			X	
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?			X	
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?			X	
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?			X	
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs?			X	
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

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#### **4.18.1. DISCUSSION**

Plumas County's population and economy is dependent upon adequate water supplies. Water is a necessity for economic development and is vitally important to maintaining many of the County's wildlife resources and recreation attractions. The Upper Feather River Watershed serves as an important supply of surface water resources. This Watershed supplies 3.2 million acre-feet per year for downstream urban, industrial and agricultural use as part of the State Water project and delivers water to 29 agencies. The State Water project also operates three reservoirs in Plumas County; Antelope Lake, Frenchman Lake and Lake Davis, which flow into Lake Oroville. Plumas County contains fourteen groundwater basins, which are primarily located in the valleys on the east side of the Sierra Crest. Sierra Valley is the largest groundwater basin, covering 125,250 acres, and underlies the Middle Fork of the Feather River. The smallest groundwater basin is Yellow Creek Valley Groundwater Basin covering 2,310 acres.

#### **4.18.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-g): Less than Significant.** The Project consists of various roadway and transportation network improvement projects throughout the County. No new roadways are proposed, RTP projects mostly consist of rehabilitation efforts. However, as described throughout this Initial Study, projects identified in the RTP would be subject to project-level environmental review to determine what mitigation measures are appropriate. Future projects under this review may result in proposed

mitigation measures to avoid or lessen potential impacts to drainages such as culverts or swales adjacent to roadway and other improvement projects. Projects are anticipated to generate spoils to some degree. However, Best Management Practices (BMP's) are followed for proper spoil storage and disposal, which often occurs at county maintenance yards. The projects constructed as a result of the RTP will all be subject to project-level review; however it is not anticipated that these projects will exceed wastewater treatment sites or landfills, nor would they require additional water supplies for the purposes of the Project. As any from the RTP will go through this project-level review, this is considered a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

## 4.19. WILDFIRE

IF LOCATED IN OR NEAR STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREAS OR LANDS CLASSIFIED AS VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES, WOULD THE PROJECT:

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?			X	
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?			X	
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including down slope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			X	

### 4.19.1. DISCUSSION

Wildland fire is an ongoing concern for the Plumas County Planning Area. Generally, the fire season extends from early spring through late fall of each year during the hotter, dryer months. However, in recent years, wildfire season is more of a year around event. Fire conditions arise from a combination of high temperatures, low moisture content in the air and fuel, an accumulation of vegetation, and high winds. Wildfire risk in Plumas County varies by location, but the entirety of the County includes Very High and High severity zones. Additionally, recent catastrophic

fires have had devastating impacts on communities in Plumas County.

Plumas County has an ongoing long-term wildfire recovery planning process under the Federal/State Disaster Recovery Framework Recovery Support Function (RSF) structure. Entities concerned with wildfire in Plumas County include Plumas County Fire Safe Council, Cal Fire, and the Plumas County Office of Emergency Services. Plans and reports concerning wildfire in Plumas County include Plumas County Communities Wildfire Protection



Plan (CWPP) 2016, Greenhorn CSD CWPP, Lake Almanor Country Club CWPP, CAL FIRE Lassen Modoc Unit Fire Plan, Feather River Resource Conservation District Fuels Treatment Project Report 2003, California Fire Plan, Plumas County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the Plumas County Wildfire Preparation & Evacuation Plan 2013. The Plumas County Communities Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) provides documentation of implementing actions designed to reduce risk to homes and communities from wildfire through education and outreach programs, the development of partnerships, and implementation of preventative activities such as hazardous fuel reduction, defensible space, land use, or building codes. The emphasis of this plan is to work from the home outward into the forests so that man-made and natural resources survive the eventual intrusion of a wildfire.

#### **4.19.2. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-d): Less than Significant.** The Project consists of various roadway and transportation network improvement projects throughout the County. No new roadways are proposed, RTP projects mostly consist of rehabilitation efforts. However, as described throughout this Initial Study, projects identified in the RTP would be subject to project-level environmental review to determine what mitigation measures are appropriate. Future projects under this review may result in proposed mitigation measures to avoid or lessen potential impacts. The Project would not result in land use changes that would affect an emergency response or emergency evacuation plan. The Project would not require installation

of infrastructure that would exacerbate fire risk. The Project would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

The Project would not interfere with any of the plans or reports mentioned in the discussion above because it would not prohibit subsequent plans from being established or prevent the goals and objectives of existing plans from being carried out. The Project would not require rerouting of traffic or road closures that would impair emergency response services. Therefore, the Project, would not significantly impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The Project would not result in exacerbated wildfire risk that would expose occupants to pollutant concentrations. Furthermore, the Project would not result in increased slopes or other conditions which would exacerbate wildfire risk. Therefore, the Project would have no impact related to exposing people or structures to flooding, landslides, or risks associated with post-fire instability.



## 4.20. MANDATORY FINDING OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation	Less Than Significant Impact	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, 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?			X	
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?			X	
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X	

### 4.20.1. RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-c): Less than Significant.** As described throughout this Initial Study, the proposed Project is compliant with 2035 General Plan land use designations and zoning districts, would not result in annexation of land, and does not propose any new roadways or developments. Any project identified in the RTP would go through a project-level environmental analysis which would propose mitigation measures should the findings recommend it. The RTP as a 'Project' would not result in new adverse environmental impacts, as it is a regional plan providing recommendations to the County. Any projects included in the RTP that would be pursued would go through project-level environmental reviews to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures would occur. The Project would not threaten biological resources, nor would it affect cultural resources of California history or prehistory including that of Native American Tribal Governments. The proposed Project does not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable, nor would it have substantial adverse effects on human beings. Implementation of the proposed Project would have a less than significant impact on these environmental topics.

## 5. REFERENCES

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