

Sierra County
2020
Regional Transportation Plan
Initial Study/Proposed Negative Declaration



Prepared for the
SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



INITIAL STUDY AND NEGATIVE DECLARATION

FOR THE SIERRA COUNTY 2020 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Prepared for

Sierra County Transportation Commission
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Project Title:	Sierra County 2020 Regional Transportation Plan
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Project Location:	Sierra County

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Sierra County Transportation Commission (SCTC) has recently prepared an updated draft *Sierra County 2020 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) (which is defined as the “Project” for purposes of this study). SCTC board members and staff members from the County of Sierra worked together with a consulting firm to guide the development of the Project. The Public Draft RTP can be viewed and downloaded from the Sierra County website:

<https://www.sierracounty.ca.gov/321/Transportation-Commission>

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

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

improve the regional transportation system. The RTP is a programmatic document containing general policies, guidelines, and lists of projects. For future projects identified in the RTP, specific design details have not been developed. Each transportation project will be assessed on an individual basis under various criteria.

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

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

The RTP presents a series of goals focusing on mobility, safety, quality of life, environmental impacts, and financial effectiveness. In the document, capital transportation improvement projects are identified which meet regional transportation needs and are consistent with regional goals and adopted planning documents. Projects identified in the RTP consist of the following:

- ♦ Short-term, mid-term, and long-term roadway/bridge projects including roadway maintenance and bridge rehabilitation/reconstruction on state highways, county roads and city streets.
- ♦ Caltrans projects consisting of guardrail replacement and embankment repair
- ♦ Forest Highway road rehabilitation/reconstruction projects and safety projects such as speed feedback signs, trailhead improvements and wayfinding signs
- ♦ Transportation planning feasibility studies for rehabilitation on local roadways
- ♦ Bicycle/pedestrian facility improvement projects, including a separated bicycle path between Sierra Brooks and Loyaltown, construction of sidewalks and ways to increase safety for non-motorized transportation users.
- ♦ Transit capital improvement projects
- ♦ Aviation capital improvement projects at the Sierraville-Dearwater Airport

Of importance to this environmental document, the RTP does not call for any projects that would significantly increase capacity of the transportation network. Additionally the RTP describes environmental mitigation measures which are typically applied to transportation projects and outlines strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In total, the financially constrained roadway and bridge projects identified in the RTP are forecast to cost approximately \$17 million over the first five years of the planning period. Funding is expected to be generated through a wide range of existing state, federal, and local sources.

PROJECT LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Location

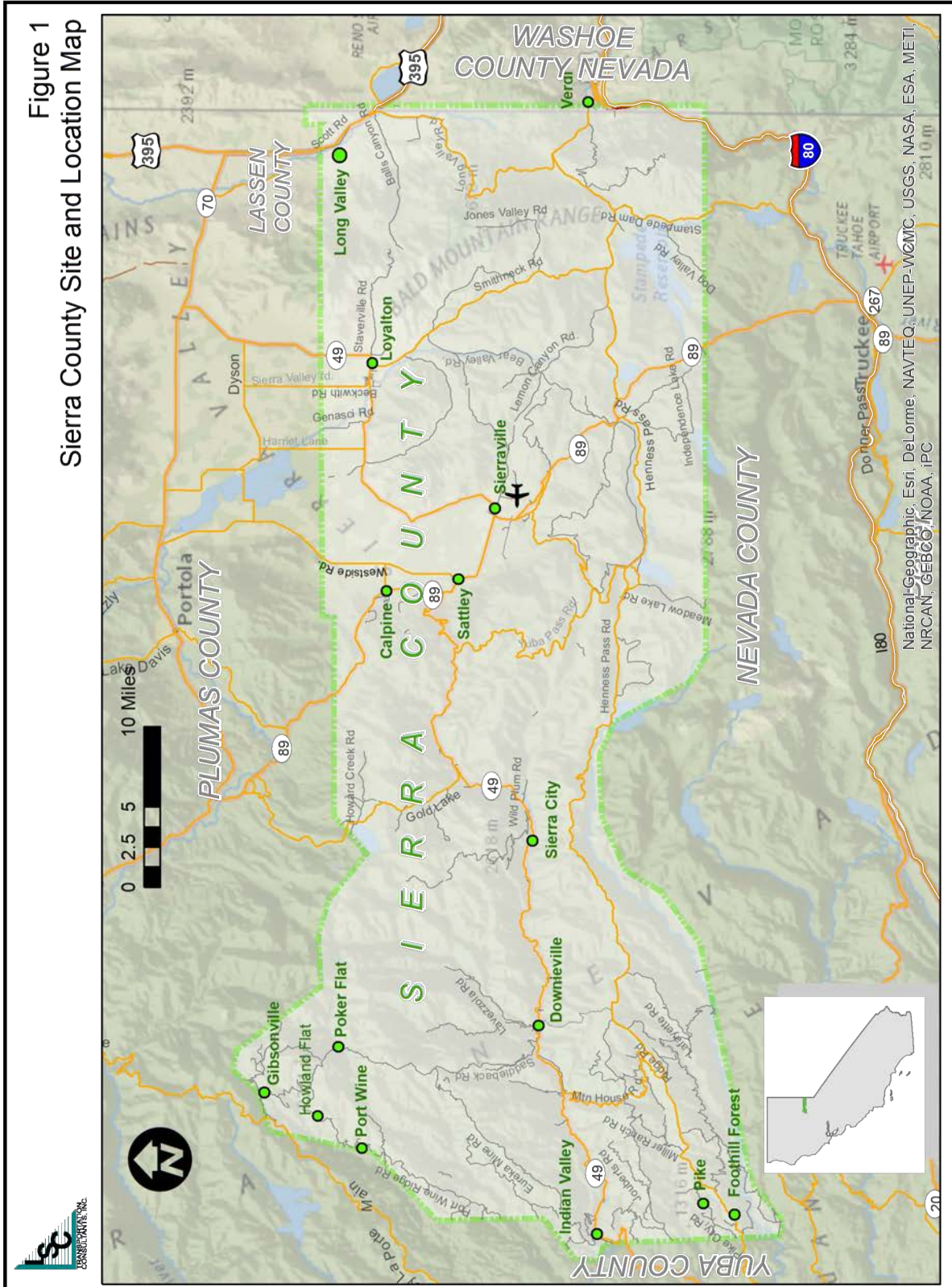
Sierra County is located in the heart of the northern section of the Sierra Nevada in California. Elevation ranges from 1,800 feet in the western foothills to over 8,000 feet in the eastern portion of the county. As shown in Figure 1, the county extends from the Nevada/California border west to Yuba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

Transportation/Circulation

The roadway system in Sierra County totals approximately 760 maintained miles. In addition to private roadways, the public road system consists of 102 miles in the state highway system, 545 miles in the county roadway system, 7 miles of city streets in Loyalton, and 107 miles maintained by federal agencies such as the US Forest Service. Two major highways traverse the county: State Route (SR) 49, running generally east-west and SR 89 running generally north-south. In addition, a 1.6-mile section of Interstate 80 passes through the southeastern tip of the county and a 3.1-mile segment of US 395 crosses the county's northeastern corner. State highways play an important role in Sierra County's transportation system serving as main streets for most of the communities in the county. The most recent estimate prepared for 2017 indicates a total of 428,000 daily vehicle vehicle-miles were traveled on all roadways in Sierra County (Caltrans Public Road Data).

Sierra County state highways and local roadways generally do not experience traffic congestion. The primary limiting factor for traffic flow is narrow and winding roadways through mountainous terrain. Overall traffic volumes have decreased on state highways in Sierra County, on average three percent annually.

Figure 1
Sierra County Site and Location Map



Population

US Census figures indicate the estimated total population of Sierra County to be 3,240 persons in the year 2010, of which 769 resided in Loyalton. From 2000 to 2010 the population in Sierra County, as estimated by the US Census, decreased by 9 percent, with the decrease occurring in both the unincorporated portions of the county as well as the City of Loyalton. Over the past 9 years, from 2010 to 2019, Sierra County's population has decreased slightly by approximately 20 people (1 percent). According to the California Department of Finance, the county will see a decrease of 7 percent (approximately 227 people) over the next 20 years.

Given the decline in population and traffic volumes on Sierra County regional roadways, important transportation improvement projects identified in the RTP reflect safety improvements and on-going upkeep of the regional transportation system.

OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

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

CONSULTATION WITH CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

Pursuant to PUC 21080.3.1 and AB 52 SCTC consulted with Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with Sierra County. SCTC requested a consultation list of tribes located within Sierra County from the Native American Heritage Commission. At the beginning of the project, July 2019, SCTC sent letters to each tribe requesting input on regional transportation needs as well to begin formal consultation. Tribes were also provided with an electronic copy of the Draft RTP. To date, no tribes have responded.

1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

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

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

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☒ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will **not** be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project (mitigation measures) have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.
- ☐ I find the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
- ☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signed: _____



Tim Beals, Executive Director
Sierra County Transportation Commission

Date: 12/10/19

Initial Study Checklist and Analysis

CHECKLIST AND ANALYSIS

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

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

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

I. Aesthetics, would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Have an adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of light or glare that	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				
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Discussion: No significant expansion of transportation facilities is proposed in the RTP, considered on a region-wide basis.

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

Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				
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Discussion: The RTP includes policies that support goods movement which would support agriculture. Additionally, the RTP does not include any capacity increasing projects – meaning that no new roadways will be constructed. RTP projects include re-paving and roadway/bridge rehabilitation projects. Additional RTP projects support goods movement related to agriculture.

III. AIR QUALITY Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors or dust affecting a substantial number of people?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Sierra County is part of the Mountain Counties Air Basin, with air quality managed by the Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District (NSAQMD). Generally, Sierra County has good air quality because of its low population density, limited industry, extensive undeveloped public lands, and rare traffic congestion. However, the county is currently in non-attainment of state PM10 standards, but not federal PM10 standards. Primary sources of PM10 pollution include wood stoves, open and prescribed burning, wind-blown dust generated from unpaved roads, and agriculture. Thus, PM10 air pollution problems in the region are not from transportation sources.

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

Discussion: The RTP contains policies to minimize environmental impacts of transportation investments. Additionally, the RTP contains wildlife undercrossing projects which will have a positive impact on biological resources. As the RTP is a programmatic document and the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, no direct physical effects will result from the adoption of this RTP. Most RTP projects are pavement rehabilitation and therefore will not have a significant impact on wildlife or habitat. The RTP does include several bridge rehabilitation projects and one new bridge which will replace an existing water crossing. The new bridge will revitalize wetland habitat by directing all crossings to one location. Various

environmental agencies were consulted as part of the RTP process. Sierra County will continue to consult with environmental agencies as part of individual project review.

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

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

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

VI. Energy Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: RTP projects do not include new roadways which will increase VMT and unnecessary energy consumption. Rather, RTP projects will maintain existing roadways.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
i. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Publication 42.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. Landslides?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Result in soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

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

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

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Create a hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Create a hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

significant hazard to the public or the environment?				
e) Be located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and consequently result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly to the risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Violate any applicable water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on-or off-site;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on-or offsite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iii. Create or contribute runoff water which	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or				
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Based on preliminary review of the projects proposed by the RTP, there does not appear to be any potential for impacts that might physically divide a community, conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation or conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Additionally, the RTP is consistent with the *Sierra County General Plan* (2012) and the *City of Loyalton General Plan* (2009). Further, the RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore there is no potential for significant impact.

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

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

XIII. NOISE Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Be located within an airport land use plan or in the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, and consequently expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

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

Discussion: Population and housing projections are included in the RTP through 2040 and show that population is anticipated to decrease over the long term. A preliminary review of the RTP indicates there will be no impact on population and housing in Sierra County primarily because the projects contained in the RTP would not increase roadway capacity. Furthermore, as the RTP is a programmatic document, specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

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

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

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

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

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

XVII. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Conflict with program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3.subdivision (b)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Substantially increase hazards to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: As defined in the RTP, the roadway system generally operates at the Caltrans concept LOS or better. Only a section of SR 49 from the Yuba County line to Sattley operates at

a lower LOS; although this is due to sharp curves and limited passing opportunities. Sierra County's low population and projected future growth rates indicate traffic congestion is not a major concern of the region. RTP projects will not likely increase vehicle miles travelled in Sierra County as no new trip generators are being constructed. Additionally, the RTP includes a long list of potential active transportation projects will have the potential to reduce vehicle miles travelled. Furthermore, as the RTP is a programmatic document, and as the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, there is no potential for significant impact.

XVIII. Tribal Cultural Resources Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
Would the project 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 Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k) or?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: All tribal governments associated with Sierra County were sent letters requesting input on regional transportation needs as well to begin formal consultation. Tribes were also provided with an electronic copy of the Draft RTP. To date, no response has been received.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water,	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?				
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management a reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: As the RTP projects focus primarily on the improvement to existing roadway facilities, the potential for significant impacts on utilities and service system is low. The update of the RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

XX. Wildfire	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project?				
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: Projects in the RTP will improve road conditions so that communities can evacuate from a wildfire more safely and efficiently. Public transit projects which replace aging vehicles can also be used for emergency evacuation due to wildfire. The RTP includes a discussion of wildfire and how transportation projects can help in that emergency situation.

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

Discussion: Preparation and adoption of the RTP represents long-term transportation planning for the Sierra County Region, and by definition does not involve individual projects that would have individual impacts. Policies are included in the RTP to minimize environmental impacts of transportation investments. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review. Therefore, there is less than significant potential impact.

The forecast growth in Sierra County is minimal over the next 20 years and will result in minimal impacts to current facilities. The RTP will benefit regional transportation and circulation as it provides a policy framework to reduce or eliminate vehicle trips and traffic congestion, safety hazards for automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and air traffic conflicts. The RTP proposes a couple road extensions in the Bishop area. There are no capacity increasing projects in this RTP. The RTP addresses connectivity and safety of the transportation system. Implementation of the Plan should result in a decrease in automobile conflicts, VMT and improved safety for both drivers and bicycle travel. As such, this impact is considered to be less than significant

PREPARERS

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