MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION AND INITIAL STUDY

FOR THE

2020 PLUMAS COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

NOVEMBER 18, 2019

Prepared for:

Plumas County Transportation Commission
1834 East Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971

Prepared by:

De Novo Planning Group
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De Novo Planning Group

A Land Use Planning, Design, and Environmental Firm

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OCTOBER 30, 2019

Prepared for:

Plumas County Transportation Commission
1834 East Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971

Prepared by:

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Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the 2020 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan

Lead Agency: Plumas County Transportation Commission
1834 East Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971

Project Title: 2020 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan

Project Location: 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. As shown in Figure 1, Plumas County is bound 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. Plumas County is located approximately 250 miles northeast of San Francisco, 80 miles northwest of Reno, and 150 miles southeast of Redding. As shown in Figure 2, two major highways traverse the County: SR 70 running east-west and SR 89 running north-south. In addition, SR 36 and SR 49 extend across parts of the County while SR 147 and SR 284 serve as roads to specific destinations. The only incorporated city in the County is Portola. Other population centers in the County are Quincy (serving as the County seat), Greenville, Graeagle, and Chester.

Project Description: The proposed project is the adoption and implementation of the 2020 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The Plumas County Transportation Commission (PCTC), as the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), is required by State law to prepare the RTP and transmit it to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) every four years. The RTP is required to be developed as per State legislation, Government Code §65080 et seq. of Chapter 2.5. The last full Plumas County RTP update was adopted in 2011. Due to little change in the regional transportation project needs in Plumas County and uncertain and inadequate funding between 2011-2018, an administrative modified update was proposed to the RTP in 2018. CALTRANS denied the proposed administrative modified update and requested a full update because of the required update every four-five years. The 2020 Plumas County RTP update will be the first full update since 2011

Since the 2011 update, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) has adopted new 2017 Regional Transportation Plan Guidelines for Regional Transportation Planning Agencies. For the first time, separate guidelines were developed for RTPAs and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

In addition to the separate guidelines for RTPAs and MPOs, the 2017 RTP Guidelines require that long range transportation planning documents include an outreach process which is inclusive of Native American Tribal Governments and that considers issues of environmental justice. The 2017 RTP Guidelines also have updated the required method of modeling from Level of Service (LOS) to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Monitoring VMT instead of LOS is supportive of the state and federal goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The three key elements of the RTP include:

> The Policy Element (Chapter 3): The purpose of the policy element is to identify legislative, planning, financial and institutional issues and requirements, as well as provide the regional vision supported by a series of goals which are supported by objectives and policies.
>
> The Action Element (Chapter 4): The Action Element describes the programs and actions necessary to support the regional vision; the Action Element lists the identified transportation needs projected in Plumas County over the next 20 years, by mode.

The Financial Element (Chapter 5): The Financial Element identifies the current and anticipated revenue sources available to fund the transportation projects and programs identified in the Action Element.

The RTP provides a foundation for transportation decisions by local, regional and State officials. This foundation is based on a vision of an efficient and environmentally sound multi-modal system. The RTP also serves as the foundation for the development of the following programs:

Federal Transportation Improvement Program (FTIP).

Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP).

Interregional Transportation Improvement Program for Plumas County (ITIP).

Findings:

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, PCTC has prepared an Initial Study to determine whether the 2020 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) may have a significant adverse effect on the environment. The Initial Study and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration reflect the independent judgment of PCTC staff. On the basis of the Initial Study, PCTC hereby finds:

Although the proposed project could have a significant adverse effect on the environment, there will not be a significant adverse effect in this case because the project has incorporated specific provisions to reduce impacts to a less than significant level and/or the mitigation measures described herein have been added to the project. A Mitigated Negative Declaration has thus been prepared.

The Initial Study, which provides the basis and reasons for this determination, is attached and/or referenced herein and is hereby made a part of this document. The funding shortfall for transportation improvements within Plumas County is considered the major impact of the 2020 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The result is that all of the transportation improvements that are needed to maintain an acceptable LOS on State and County roads are not included in the plan. However, the RTP projects that are included, and that meet the "fiscal constraint" criteria, are considered priorities for the PCTC for meeting RTP goals and policies established for the 2020 Plumas County RTP.

_____ _____

Date

Proposed Mitigation Measures:

The following Mitigation Measures are extracted from the Initial Study. These measures are designed to avoid or minimize potentially significant impacts, and thereby reduce them to an insignificant level. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) is an integral part of RTP project implementation to ensure that program level mitigation is properly implemented by the PCTC and the implementing agencies. The MMRP will describe actions required to implement the appropriate mitigation for each CEQA category including identifying the responsible agency, program timing, and program monitoring requirements. The applicability of each mitigation measure presented in the MMRP will be determined by the implementing agency at the time that an individual project is implemented. In some instances, a mitigation measure may not be applicable or relevant to a project. For instance, maintenance projects such as repaving, striping, signage, etc., are anticipated to be within the existing right-of-way and not cause a potentially significant impact that warrants mitigation. For individual projects that do not warrant these mitigation measures, the implementing agency will simply note in the project file that the mitigation measure is not applicable given its circumstances, and move forward with project implementation. On the other hand, some projects will encroach into areas that were not previously disturbed

(i.e. road widening projects). It is anticipated that those projects have a greater potential for impact and will warrant compliance with these mitigation measures to ensure that impacts are reduced to an insignificant level. The discretion on each project will be with the implementing agency based on the individual project circumstances. Based on this programmatic-level of analysis, and the conclusions provided in the Initial Study, the impacts from RTP implementation would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with the implementation of the mitigation measures presented below.

Biological Resources

Mitigation Measure 1: *Prior to final design approval of RTP projects, take steps to identify and protect any biological resources associated with the project. The implementing agency should retain a qualified biologist to conduct a field reconnaissance of the limits of the project area to identify special status plants, animals, and their habitats, as well as protected natural communities including wetland and terrestrial communities. If the biologist identifies protected biological resources within the limits of the project area, consider alternative designs that seek to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the biological resources. If the project cannot be designed to completely avoid, coordinate with the appropriate regulatory agency (i.e. USFWS, NMFS, CDFW, ACOE) to obtain regulatory permits and implement project-specific mitigation prior to any construction activities.*

Mitigation Measure 2: *Prior to design approval of individual projects, the implementing agency will incorporate economically viable design measures, as applicable and necessary, to allow wildlife (terrestrial and/or aquatic) to move through the transportation corridor, both during construction activities and post construction. Potential measures should include appropriately spaced breaks in a center barrier, and other measures that are designed to allow wildlife to move through the transportation corridor.*

Cultural Resources

Mitigation Measure 3: *During environmental review of individual projects, and prior to construction, if architectural resources are deemed as potentially eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Places as determined by a qualified architectural historian, Plumas County should consider avoidance through project redesign as feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the historic resource should be formally documented through the use of large-format photography, measured drawings, written architectural descriptions, and historical narratives. The documentation should be entered into the Library of Congress, and archived in the California Historical Resources Information System. In the event of building relocation, ensure that any alterations to significant buildings or structures conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.*

Mitigation Measure 4: *If cultural resources (i.e., prehistoric sites, historic sites, and isolated artifacts and features) are discovered work shall be halted immediately within 50 meters (165 feet) of the discovery, Plumas County shall be notified, and a qualified archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in prehistoric or historical archaeology shall be retained to determine the significance of the discovery.*

Plumas County shall consider mitigation recommendations presented by the professional archaeologist for any unanticipated discoveries and shall carry out the measures deemed feasible and appropriate. Such measures may include avoidance, preservation in place, excavation, documentation, curation, data recovery, or other appropriate measures.

Hydrology and Water Quality

Mitigation Measure 6: *Comply with NPDES General Construction Permit requirements. To reduce or eliminate construction-related water quality effects, the implementing agency will ensure that transportation improvement*

projects comply with the requirements of the NPDES General Construction Permit. Project implementation agencies are required to obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit before the onset of any construction activities, where the disturbed area is 1 acre or greater in size.

A SWPPP will be developed by a qualified engineer or erosion control specialist in accordance with the NPDES General Construction Permit requirements. The SWPPP will be implemented prior to the issuance of any grading permit before construction. The SWPPP will be kept on site during construction activity and will be made available upon request to representatives of the RWQCB.

Compliance and coverage under the NPDES General Construction Permit will require controls of pollutant discharges that utilize BMPs and technology to reduce erosion and sediments to meet water quality standards. BMPs may consist of a wide variety of measures taken to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff from the construction site. Measures may include, temporary erosion control measures (such as silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, silt/sediment basins and traps, check dams, geofabric, sandbag dikes, and temporary revegetation or other ground cover) will be employed to control erosion from disturbed areas.

Final selection of BMPs will be subject to approval by the implementing agency. The implementing agency will verify that an NOI has been filed with the SWRCB, and a SWPPP has been developed before allowing construction to begin.

Mitigation Measure 7: *Implement a Spill Prevention and Control Program. As part of requiring compliance with the NPDES General Construction Permit, the implementing agency and its agents will develop and implement a spill prevention and control program to minimize the potential for, and effects from, spills of hazardous, toxic, or petroleum substances during all construction activities. The program will be completed before any construction activities begin.*

Mitigation Measure 8: *Implement measures to maintain water quality after construction. The project implementing agencies will implement source and treatment control measures according to the Plumas County Stormwater Quality Program. General site design control measures are required to minimize the volume and rate of stormwater runoff discharge from the project site. General site design control measures incorporated into the project design can include:*

- *conserving natural areas;*
- *protecting slopes and channels;*
- *minimizing impervious areas;*
- *storm drain identification, and appropriate messaging and signing; and*
- *minimizing effective imperviousness through the use of turf buffers and/or grass-lined channels, if feasible.*

In addition, projects must include treatment control measures, if possible and when feasible, to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff prior to discharge to the storm drain system or receiving water. Treatment control measures may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- *Vegetated buffer strip*
- *Vegetated swale*
- *Extended detention basin*
- *Wet pond*
- *Constructed wetland*
- *Detention basin/sand filter*
- *Porous pavement detention*

- *Porous landscape detention*
- *Infiltration basin*
- *Infiltration trench*
- *Media filter*
- *Retention/irrigation*
- *Proprietary control device*

Selection and implementation of these measures would be based on a project-by-project basis depending on project size and stormwater treatment needs.

***Mitigation Measure 9**: Comply with provisions for dewatering. Before discharging any dewatered effluent to surface water, the project implementation agency will obtain an NPDES permit and Waste Discharge Requirement from the RWQCB and/or the Lahontan RWQCB, as appropriate. Depending on the volume and characteristics of the discharge, coverage under the NPDES General Construction Permit may be permissible. If coverage under the General Construction Permit is not allowed, the project will conform to requirements of the General Dewatering Permit, issued by the RWQCB and/or other applicable agencies. The project implementation agencies will design and implement measures as necessary so that the discharge limits identified in the relevant permit are met.*

***Mitigation Measure 10**: Conduct project-level drainage studies. As part of the infrastructure plan, the project implementation agencies and/or their contractors will conduct a drainage study. This study will address the following topics:*

- *A calculation of pre-development runoff conditions and post-development runoff scenarios using appropriate engineering methods. This analysis will evaluate potential changes to runoff through specific design criteria, and account for increased surface runoff.*
- *An assessment of existing drainage facilities within the project area, and an inventory of necessary upgrades, replacements, redesigns, and/or rehabilitation, including the sizing of on-site stormwater detention features and pump stations.*
- *A description of the proposed maintenance program for the onsite drainage system.*
- *Standards for drainage systems to be installed on a project/parcel-specific basis.*
- *Proposed design measures to ensure structures are not located within 100-year floodplain areas.*

Drainage systems will be designed in accordance with the County's, Flood Control Agency's, and other applicable flood control design criteria. As a performance standard, measures to be implemented from those studies will provide for no net increase in peak stormwater discharge relative to current conditions, ensure that 100-year flooding and its potential impacts are maintained at or below current levels, and that people and structures are not exposed to additional flood risk.

***Mitigation Measure 11**: Avoid restriction of flood flows. Proposed projects requiring federal approval or funding will comply with Executive Order 11988 for floodplain management. Projects will avoid incompatible floodplain development designs, they will restore and preserve the natural and beneficial floodplain values, and they will maintain consistency with the standards and criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) will be prepared and submitted to FEMA where unavoidable construction would occur within 100-year floodplains. The LOMR will include revised local base flood elevations for projects constructed within flood prone areas. Potential impacts due to flooding as a result of RTP projects are assumed to be alleviated through the FEMA LOMR approval process.*

***Mitigation Measure 12**: Avoid project dewatering. Project designs that require continual de-watering activities for the life of the projects will be avoided if possible. Due to the potential for flooding and destabilizing conditions, project implementation agencies will choose project designs that do not require continual dewatering, if suitable*

project alternatives exist. Project alternatives may include construction of overpasses, as opposed to below-grade underpasses, which would avoid interception with groundwater.

***Mitigation Measure 13**: Design projects to pass flows in the event of levee or dam failure. If the proposed project would have the potential to impede or redirect flows from a levee or dam failure, such that there would be less than a one percent chance that flooding would extend to areas not previously mapped as inundation areas, the project applicant will redesign the project, to the maximum extent practicable, such that the site would exhibit pre-project inundation conditions. This may be achieved through incorporation of culverts or bridges into the project design. The project applicant would consult with the California and Plumas County Offices of Emergency Services to ensure that the flooding risks of pre-project conditions would not increase.*

Noise

***Mitigation Measure 14**: Prior to approval of new construction projects adjacent to noise-sensitive uses, the implementing agency shall perform a project-level noise evaluation. The implementing agencies shall consider the following measures:*

- *Construct vegetative earth berms with mature trees and landscaping to attenuate roadway noise on adjacent residences or other sensitive use, and /or sound walls or other similar sound-attenuating buffers, as appropriate.*
- *Design projects to maximize the distance between noise-sensitive land uses and new roadway lanes, roadways, rail lines, transit centers, park-and-ride lots, and other new noise generating facilities.*
- *Establish speed limits and limits on hours of operation of rail and transit systems.*

***Mitigation Measure 15**: Subsequent projects under the RTP shall be designed and implemented to reduce adverse construction noise and vibration impacts to sensitive receptors, as feasible. Measures to reduce noise and vibration effects may include, but are not limited to:*

- *Limit noise-generating construction activities, excluding those that would result in a safety concern to workers or the public, to the least noise-sensitive daytime hours, which is generally 6am to 9pm.*
- *Construction of temporary sound barriers to shield noise-sensitive land uses.*
- *Location of noise-generating stationary equipment (e.g., power generators, compressors, etc.) at the furthest practical distance from nearby noise-sensitive land uses.*
- *Phase demolition, earth-moving and ground-impacting operations so as not to occur in the same time period.*
- *Use of equipment noise-reduction devices (e.g., mufflers, intake silencers, and engine shrouds) in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.*
- *Substituting noise/vibration-generating equipment with equipment or procedures that would generate lower levels of noise/vibration. For instance, in comparison to impact piles, drilled piles or the use of a sonic or vibratory pile driver are preferred alternatives where geological conditions would permit their use.*
- *Other specific measures as they are deemed appropriate by the implementing agency to maintain consistency with adopted policies and regulations regarding noise.*
- *Comply with all local noise control and noise rules, regulations, and ordinances.*

Tribal Resources

Implementation of several mitigation measures presented under the cultural resources section of this Initial Study would ensure that all subsequent RTP projects either avoid known tribal resources, or take steps to implement amelioration methods to reduce impacts to known resources. It would also require investigations and avoidance methods in the event that a previously undiscovered resource is encountered during construction activities. This mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less than significant level.

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INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

PROJECT TITLE

2020 Plumas County Regional Transportation Plan

LEAD AGENCY NAME AND ADDRESS

Plumas County Transportation Commission
1834 East Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971

CONTACT PERSON AND PHONE NUMBER

Jim Graham
1834 East Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971
(530) 283-6169

PROJECT SPONSOR'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Plumas County Transportation Commission
520 Main Street
Quincy, CA 95971

PROJECT LOCATION

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. As shown in Figure 1, Plumas County is bound 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. Plumas County is located approximately 250 miles northeast of San Francisco, 80 miles northwest of Reno, and 150 miles southeast of Redding. As shown in Figure 2, two major highways traverse the County: SR 70 running east-west and SR 89 running north-south. In addition, SR 36 and SR 49 extend across parts of the County while SR 147 and SR 284 serve as roads to specific destinations. The only incorporated city in the County is Portola. Other population centers in the County are Quincy (serving as the County seat), Greenville, Graeagle, and Chester.

PROJECT SETTING

Plumas County is comprised of approximately 2,618 square miles of land. Approximately 24 percent of the land is in private ownership (400,000 acres), while the remaining 76 percent is national forest land (1,245,000 acres). The southern range of the Cascades, the northern range of the Sierra Nevada, the Feather River Canyon and Lake Almanor comprise the predominant geographical features of the County.

Plumas County is defined by topographic features, primarily ridge lines and water ways. The majority of the County's current and potential population resides in the Almanor, American Valley, Indian Valley, Mohawk, and Sierra Valley plan areas. Canyon, Middle Fork and Last Chance are sparsely populated. A description of the Plan Areas follows:

> The Almanor Area, which includes Lake Almanor, the town of Chester and the peninsula area is located in the northwestern corner of the County and is best known for its

recreational activities and as the gateway to Lassen Volcanic National Park. Lake Almanor is the County's largest lake with approximately 52 miles of shoreline and year-round recreational activities. The area offers water sports, fishing, multiple golf courses and an extensive network of trails. Winter recreation consists of snowmobiling and backcountry skiing.

The American Valley is a lush area nestled against the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada range. The town of Quincy is located on the southern edge of American Valley. The primary land uses within Quincy are residential and retail services. Quincy is known for its historic downtown buildings in the commercial core along Main Street (State Route 70/89). Feather River College is located approximately one mile north of the commercial core area of Quincy. Gansner Field Airport is located north of Quincy (east of Feather River College) and supports adjacent industrial land uses. The Bucks Lake area, 17 miles southwest of Quincy, provides opportunities for fishing, camping, hiking and water sports throughout the spring, summer and fall. During the winter, Bucks Lake is a recreational destination for snowmobilers and cross-country skiers.

The Indian Valley area, located in the north-central part of the County along State Route 89, includes the communities of Greenville, Taylorsville, Crescent Mills and Canyon Dam. Taylorsville is located near Arlington Road (A-22) and Beckwourth-Genesee Road (112) on the way to Antelope Lake Recreation Area. Indian Valley also includes Round Valley Reservoir, Indian Falls, Indian Creek and small alpine lakes offering camping, fishing and other outdoor recreational opportunities. The Greenville Rancheria is located three miles east of Greenville along North Valley Road. It is comprised of 45.5 acres in two parcels, the Indian Mission parcel and the Chico Jim Cemetery.

The neighboring communities of Blairsden, Graeagle and Clio located in Mohawk Valley along the State Route 89 corridor are primarily planned residential centers for vacation and retirement. There are several golf courses in this planning area.

Portola, Plumas County's only incorporated City is located in the Sierra Valley. Portola was incorporated in 1946 and has a population of approximately 2,170. Primary land uses within Portola are residential and retail services. Portola is divided into north and south sections by the Feather River and the Union Pacific Railroad. Commercial retail districts are located in the north section along State Highway 70 and the south section along historic Commercial Street. Eastern Plumas Hospital and the Plumas Sierra County Courthouse are located within the City. Also located in Portola are the Post Office, Plumas County Sherriff Substation, Veteran Memorial Hall and other social service offices that support both the City and the outlying unincorporated area. With no major industry and limited area for industrial growth the City increasingly relies on the growing tourism trade. Reliable and safe transportation routes are necessary and bring tourists who in turn support local businesses and establishments such as the western Pacific Railroad Museum, the Williams House Museum and Visitors Center, Portola Railroad Days and other community events.

Another point of interest is Lake Davis which is located in the northwest portion of Sierra Valley. The lake offers many outdoor activities such as camping, fishing, mountain biking, snowmobiling and wildlife viewing.

The southeastern corner of the Sierra Valley supports much of the County's cattle producing industry. The towns of Beckwourth, Vinton and Chilcoot are in this area and

linked by Highway 70. Chilcoot is known as the gateway to Frenchman Lake, a large reservoir that provides many recreational opportunities.

The Canyon planning area, along Highway 70 between Oroville and Quincy is the north fork of the Feather River, also referred to as the Scenic Feather River Canyon. The Feather River Canyon is one of the most popular scenic driving routes in the State. This state designated scenic byway is highlighted by brilliant colors in the fall, cascading waterfalls and wildflowers in the spring and steep rugged canyon walls. The river offers an array of outdoor activities including gold panning, fishing, rafting, kayaking, camping and hiking (including the Pacific Rim Trail). Small communities found along the Feather River Canyon include Tobin, Belden, Caribou, Rich Bar, Twain and Paxton.

The Middle Fork, which includes La Porte and Little Grass Valley Reservoir, is located in the southwestern corner of the County. La Porte is accessible in the spring, summer and fall from Quincy via Quincy/La Porte Road and from Butte and Yuba Counties via La Porte Road year round. La Porte offers miles of roads and amenities for off-highway vehicles and cross-country skiing. Little Grass Valley Reservoir offers a host of summer outdoor activities including camping, swimming, boating and fishing.

Dixie Mountain State Game Refuge and Last Chance Canyon are located in the Last Chance Planning Area. Last Chance Canyon offers hiking, fishing and presents unique geologic features. Several creeks run through the area including Last Chance Creek, Squaw Queen Creek and Thompson Creek. Two Forest Service campgrounds, Conklin Park and Laufman are accessible on Forest Service roads.

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING

The RTP goals objectives, and policies were developed to be consistent with the General Plans for Plumas County and the City of Portola. The RTP is not a land use planning document, and does not establish, or cause changes to land uses or zoning within these jurisdictions. All land use and zoning decisions within the RTP's planning area fall under the jurisdiction of Plumas County or the City of Portola. The RTP is designed as a system of transportation improvements that support circulation and land use policy decisions that have been made by these jurisdictions, and which are reflected in their respective General Plans and Zoning ordinances.

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>
> Interregional Transportation Improvement Program for Plumas County (ITIP).

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The RTP is the result of a broad planning process. This process involves many government agencies, as well as private interests and the public. Contact people for agencies with an interest in the RTP were tracked in a stakeholder list throughout the duration of the RTP development and were invited to outreach meetings to become involved in the RTP development. Letters were sent by postage and by e-mail in the beginning of the RTP development process to neighboring Counties' transportation planning agencies. Agency contacts were also alerted of the option to become involved in the RTP and provide input or recommended projects through a variety of other methods, such as the digital questionnaire and a comment feedback form available on the project website. Through the community outreach process, the following groups were specifically invited to be involved throughout the plan development:

- Caltrans
- City of Portola
- Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
- Susanville Indian Rancheria
- Greenville Rancheria

- Chester-Lake Almanor Chamber of Commerce
- Quincy Chamber of Commerce
- Indian Valley Chamber of Commerce
- Eastern Plumas Chamber of Commerce
- Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship
- Feather River College
- California Highway Patrol
- Plumas County Sheriff's Office
- Almanor Recreation and Park District
- Central Plumas Recreation and Park District
- Eastern Plumas Recreation and Park District
- Plumas-Eureka State Park Association
- Plumas National Forest
- Lassen National Forest
- Cal-OES
- Union Pacific Railroad
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
- Bodfish Bicycle

During development of the 2020 RTP update, existing plans, documents and studies addressing transportation in Plumas County were reviewed to ensure the RTP's consistency with other planning documents relevant in Plumas County. These documents include but are not limited to the following:

- Plumas County General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements (2013)
- City of Portola General Plan Land Use and Circulation Elements (2012)
- Plumas County Mobility Management Feasibility Study (2011)
- 2018 Plumas County Active Transportation Plan – Pedestrian/Bicycle Plan
- 2015 Plumas County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
- 2015 Plumas County Short Range Transit Plan
- Regional Transportation Plans from adjacent RTPAs and MPOs.
- California Transportation Plan (2016)

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

The Plumas County Transportation Commission will be the Lead Agency for the proposed project, pursuant to the State Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15050. No specific permits are required by any other responsible or trustee agencies to approve the proposed project. However, there are numerous permits and approvals that may be required to implement the improvements identified in the RTP. The following additional agency approvals apply to the proposed project: County of Plumas, City of Portola, California Transportation Commission (CTC), and California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).

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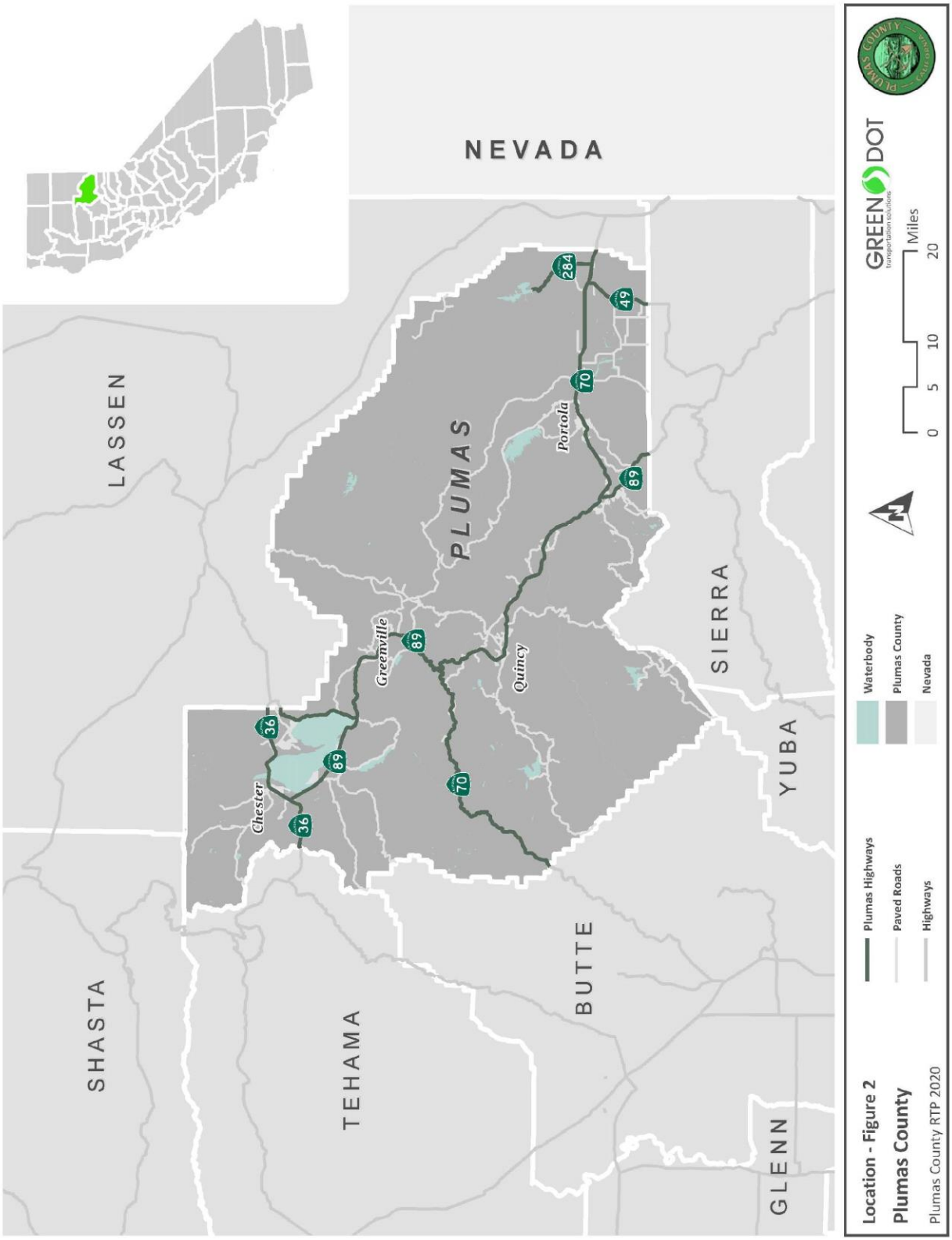
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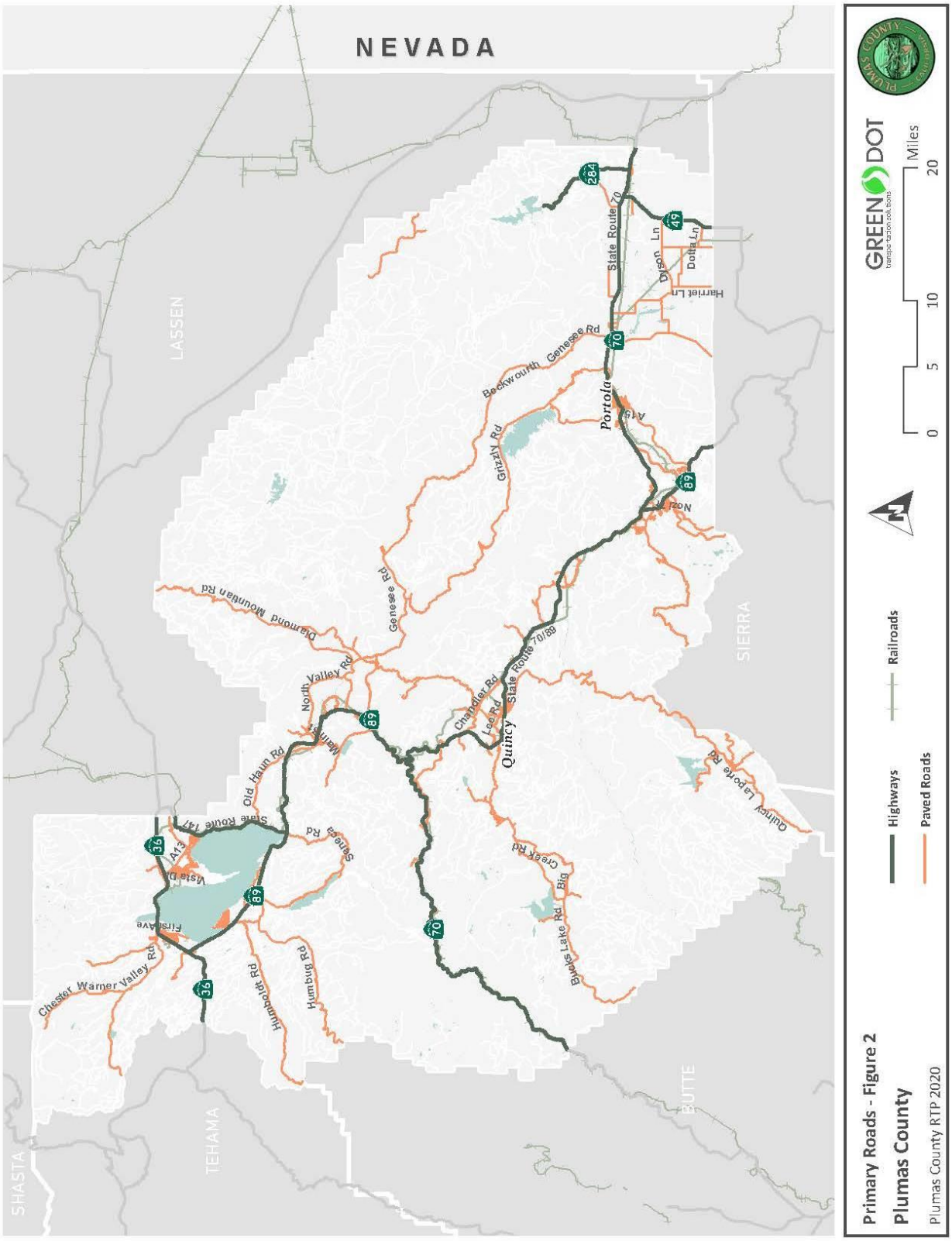
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Genesee Rd
Diamond Mountain Rd
North Valley Rd
Old Haun Rd
Chandler Rd
Lee Rd
Quincy Laporte Rd
Big Creek Rd
Bucks Lake Rd
Spring Rd
Chester Warner Valley Rd
Humboldt Rd
Humbug Rd
Dyson Ln
Doyle Ln
Harriet Ln
Railroads
Highways
Paved Roads
0 5 10 20
Miles
GREEN DOT
Primary Roads - Figure 2
Plumas County
Plumas County RTP 2020

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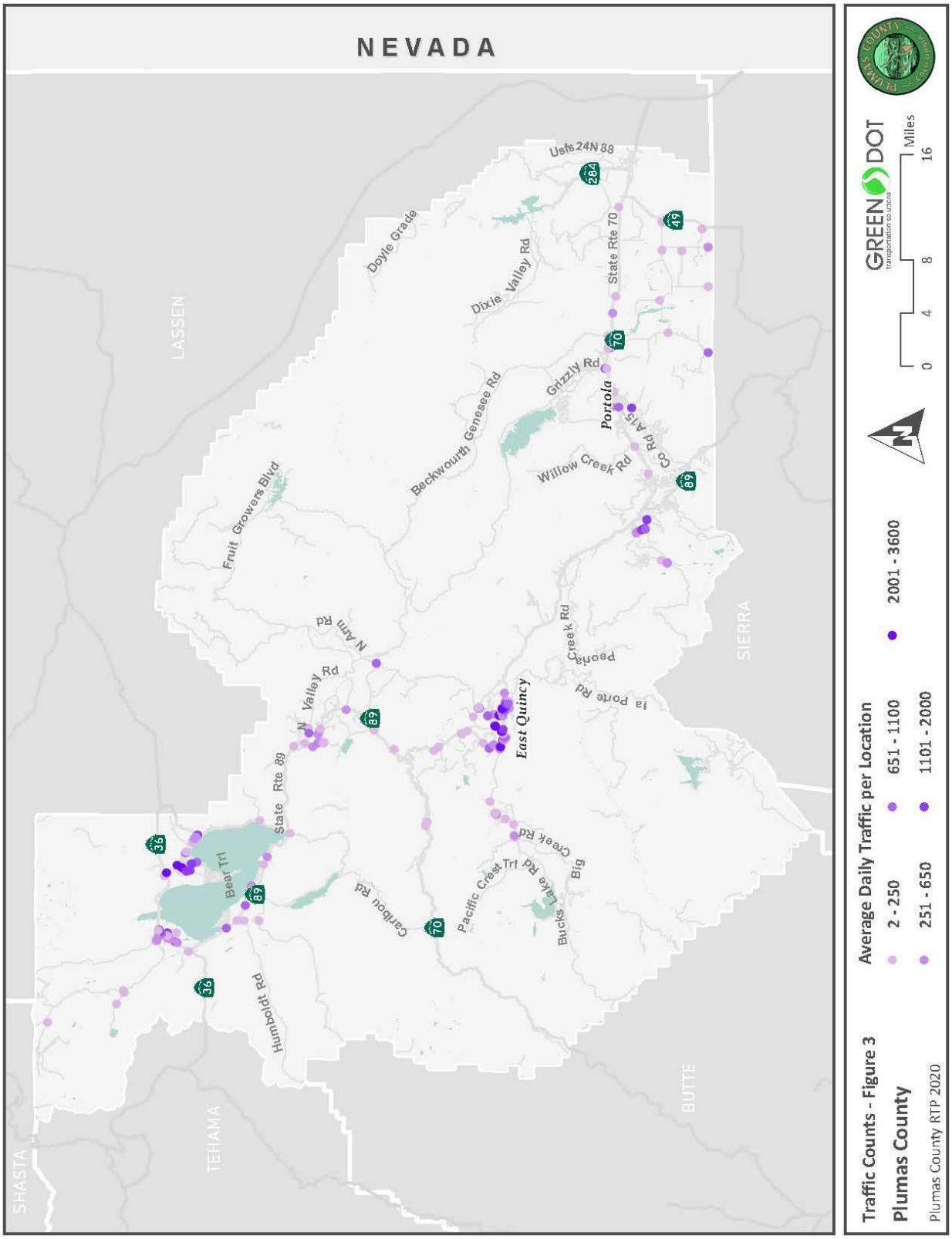
NEVADA
LASSEN
SIERRA
BUTTE
TEHAMA
SHASTA
Usfs 24N 88
Doyle Grade
Dixie Valley Rd
State Rte 70
Grizzly Rd
Portola
Co Rd A15
Willow Creek Rd
Beckwourth Genesee Rd
Fruit Growers Blvd
N Arm Rd
Valley Rd
State Rte 89
East Quincy
Peoria Creek Rd
la Porte Rd
Bear Trl
Caribou Rd
Pacific Crest Trl
Lake Rd
Big Bucks Creek Rd
Humboldt Rd
Miles
0 4 8 16
GREEN DOT
transportation solutions
Average Daily Traffic per Location
2 - 250
251 - 650
651 - 1100
1101 - 2000
2001 - 3600
Traffic Counts - Figure 3
Plumas County
Plumas County RTP 2020

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ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED

The environmental factors checked 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 and Forestry Resources		Air Quality
X	Biological Resources	X	Cultural Resources		Energy
	Geology and Soils		Greenhouse Gasses		Hazards and Hazardous Materials
X	Hydrology and Water Quality	X	Land Use and Planning		Mineral Resources
X	Noise		Population and Housing		Public Services
	Recreation		Transportation	X	Tribal Cultural Resources
	Utilities and Service Systems		Wildfire	X	Mandatory Findings of Significance

The above environmental factors that are checked/listed as potentially affected by this project, all have been determined to be reduced to an insignificant level by one of the following: 1) implementation of mitigation measures presented in this Initial Study, 2) implementation of standard best management practices, 3) compliance with General Plan policies, 4) compliance with established ordinances, or 5) compliance with federal/state regulations. The residual impact for each environmental factor is anticipated to be “less than significant.”

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.
X	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 mitigations are incorporated into the project and have been 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 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.

Signature Date

EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS

1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where 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 (mitigation measures from Section XVII, "Earlier Analyses," may be cross-referenced).
5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and

b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significant.

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

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 is significant. 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.

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 21 environmental topic areas.

I. AESTHETICS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	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) In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views 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?			*X*	
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?			*X*	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a-c): Views of scenic resources, scenic water resources, and other scenic resources in the county are available from highways and roadways, including scenic roads and corridors, throughout the county. Improvements to existing infrastructure may result in modification of the foreground of the various scenic viewsheds throughout the county.

There is also potential for individual improvement projects to affect scenic vistas and resources or degrade the visual character of the area. Examples would include improvement projects that are located adjacent to a broad viewshed such as the mountain ranges, valleys, ridgelines, or water bodies along roadways, or adjacent to the focal point of the forefront of the broad viewshed, such as visually important trees, rocks, or historic buildings. An impact would occur if a project would change the view to the middle ground or background elements of the broad viewshed, or remove the visually important trees, rocks, or historic buildings in the foreground.

While individual projects are not anticipated to significantly disrupt mid-ground or backdrop views of scenic vistas, individual projects have not yet been designed and may involve features, such as soundwalls, grading, or structures that may disrupt views. These projects may involve removal of trees or other visually significant features, or may result in development that would cause an intermittent interruption in views to users of the highways, roadways, and other

components of the transportation system. Individual projects could also convert areas of open space to developed uses, resulting in a permanent change in views.

Plumas County has policies and standard measures related to the protection of scenic resources and views, the potential remains for removal of scenic features, particularly those that would be in the foreground of scenic viewsheds and vistas. These policies and standard measures will ensure that projects to include design measures to avoid or reduce removal of scenic features and scenic views. Implementation of these policies and standard measures would reduce the impact to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

Response d): There is a potential for an individual project under the RTP to create new sources of light and glare near sensitive receptors. Examples would include projects that require new roadway lighting, lit signs, and/or construction lighting. The design process would ensure that projects are designed to meet minimum safety and security standards and to avoid spillover lighting to sensitive uses. Design could include luminaries that cast low-angle illumination to minimize incidental spillover of light onto adjacent private properties and undeveloped open space. Fixtures that project light upward or horizontally will not be used. Luminaries will be shielded and directed away from habitat and open space areas adjacent to the project site. Implementation of these standard measures would reduce this impact to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

Would the project:	***Potentially Significant Impact***	***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation***	***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) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 1222(g)) or timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code section 4526)?			X	
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a): The proposed project would not 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. Implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact relative to this issue.

Response b): The RTP includes improvements to the transportation systems throughout the county. Transportation improvements proposed are compatible with agricultural and timber zoning and do not conflict with the active Williamson Act Contracts. Agricultural and timber operations throughout the county would benefit from improved movement of their commodities from the resource to the marketplace as a result of the improvements to the transportation systems. Implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact relative to this issue.

Response c-d): The RTP includes improvements to the transportation systems throughout the county, including the areas with timber. These improvements are designed to facilitate the General Plan. Transportation improvements proposed are compatible with the zoning of the timber area. Timber operations throughout the county would benefit from improved movement of the timber from the forest as a result of the improvements to the transportation systems. Implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact relative to this issue.

Response e): The RTP does not **i**nvolve changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use, or

conversion of forest land to non-forest use. The proposed project will have a ***less than significant*** impact on agricultural or forest lands or operations.

III. AIR QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
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?			X	
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a-d):

Air Quality Conformity

Air quality in Plumas County is generally good, due to low population density, a limited number of industrial and agricultural installations and low levels of traffic congestion. Plumas County is included in the Mountain Counties Air Basin and is federally unclassified or in attainment with ozone, PM10 and PM2.5, with the exception of the greater Portola area. 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 PM2.5 based on air monitoring data from 2011 through 2013. Poor air quality is generally attributed to wildland fires, wood stoves, and open burning and not transportation conditions in Plumas County. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) approved the *Portola Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) Attainment Plan (Plan)* on February 16, 2017 as a revision to the State SIP.

At the request of U.S. EPA, CARB staff developed additional transportation conformity motor vehicle emissions budgets for the rate of progress year of 2019 and the post-attainment milestone year of 2022. CARB staff developed these supplemental budgets in consultation with the Air District, Caltrans and U.S. EPA. Annual average daily emissions are used in the Plan consistent with the way the standard is measured. Consequently, conformity budgets have been set with annual average daily emissions for 2019 and 2022.

The transportation conformity budgets developed in the supplement were calculated with the California motor vehicle emissions model, EMFAC2014. U.S. EPA approved EMFAC2014 for use in transportation conformity and SIPs in December 2015. The budget was calculated by taking the default EMFAC output for Plumas County for 2019 and 2022 and applying a factor to estimate the portion of emissions from the Portola NAA. This factor is based on the ratio of inventory grid cells in the Portola NAA to the total number of inventory grid cells in the Portola NAA, and is equal to 0.14. The result is rounded upwards to the nearest 0.001 ton to obtain the budgets. These budgets do not reflect any additional control measures or strategies and are consistent with the adopted Plan's emissions inventory.

The supplemental transportation conformity budgets for 2019 and 2022 are set at 0.003 tons per day. The budgets, with the additional emissions from rounding, are consistent with the demonstrations of progress, attainment and the post-attainment milestone. The proposed RTP does not propose anything that would obstruct or otherwise be in conflict with these budgets.

Isolated Rural Area

A finding of conformity is required under Clean Air Act section 176(c) (42 U.S.C. 7506 (c)) to ensure that federally supported highway and transit project activities are consistent with ("conform to") the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Conformity ensures that transportation activities will not cause new air quality violations, worsen existing violations, or delay timely attainment of the relevant national ambient air quality standards. Additionally, SIPs in California are developed to ensure conformity with the State ambient air quality standards.

While regional transportation conformity findings are required to approve RTPs in most places, they are not required for isolated rural areas, which include the Plumas County Transportation Commission. Plumas County is not part of an MPO, and regional planning is performed in part by Caltrans and the Plumas County Planning Commission. RTP and TIP conformity requirements do not imply, instead regional conformity is done at the project level.

While the RTP provides improvements that will improve the transportation system, it should be noted that it does not cause any increase in population or VMT. Implementation of the RTP will not conflict with the Air Quality Plan, cause a violation of Air Quality Standards, contribute substantially to an existing air quality violation, or result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of a criteria pollutant in a nonattainment area. Therefore, this is impact is considered ***less than significant***.

Construction Emissions

Plumas County is currently designated as state "non-attainment" for $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10} and is attainment or unclassified for all other criteria pollutants (state). Construction activities associated with construction and implementation of the various roadway and other transportation improvement projects identified in the RTP would result in temporary short-term emissions associated with vehicle trips from construction workers, operation of construction equipment, and the dust generated during construction activities. These temporary and short-term emissions would generate additional ozone precursors (ROG and NOx), which could exacerbate the County's existing non-attainment status for this criteria pollutant.

All individual projects would be subject to the Air District Regulations and Rules related to all project construction sites. This includes dust abatement strategies and best management practices that significantly reduce PMs from being generated during construction Compliance with the Air District's Regulations and Rules will ensure that short-term air quality impacts are reduced to a ***less than significant*** level.

Localized Carbon Monoxide

Currently, the Mountain Counties Air Basin is in attainment of federal and State standards for CO. The RTP projects are designed to improve traffic flows and reduce congestion system-wide, reducing the potential for CO "hot spots" that can occur from exhaust of idling cars waiting to clear a heavily congested intersection or crossing. The RTP projects are intended to reduce congested conditions throughout the system while accommodating additional traffic generated by the increase in population projected for Plumas County. The potential for CO hot spots in

Plumas County is highly unlikely do to the existing traffic conditions. This is considered a ***less than significant*** impact.

Asbestos Hazards

Based upon the regional nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at an RTP planning level is not feasible. Plumas County will conduct appropriate project-level assessments and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. If asbestos is deemed present naturally, or in existing facilities, an Asbestos Hazard Dust Mitigation Plan would be prepared to ensure that adequate dust control and asbestos hazard mitigation measures are implemented during project construction. This standard practice is consistent with CARB's asbestos airborne toxic control measure (ATCM) (Title 17, CCR § 93105 and 93106) and would ensure that any construction activities that may result in the release of asbestos would include appropriate measures to ensure that exposure to construction workers and the public is minimized to acceptable State and local levels. Implementation of this standard measure would ensure that this potential impact is reduced to a ***less-than-significant*** level.

Responses e): Implementation of the RTP would not directly create or generate objectionable odors. Persons residing in the immediate vicinity of proposed improvements may be subject to temporary odors typically associated with roadway construction activities (diesel exhaust, hot asphalt, etc.). However, any odors generated by construction activities would be minor and would be short and temporary in duration. This is considered a ***less than significant*** impact.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*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 Game 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, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (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

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a): According to the Plumas County General Plan and California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) search, there are 33 special status plant species and 24 special status animal species (one invertebrate, one fish, three amphibians, 9 birds, and 10 mammals) within Plumas County. These species are presumed present at any given time throughout their habitat range. Some species require localized micro-habitats, while others are highly mobile and may occur throughout the County. Many of the documented special-status species may be directly or indirectly affected by RTP projects within the County if the improvements are to encroach on the species' habitat, or movement corridors.

Construction and maintenance activities associated with the individual projects could result in the direct loss or indirect disturbance of special-status wildlife species or their habitats that are known to occur, or have potential to occur, in the County. Impacts on special-status wildlife species or their habitat could result in a reduction in local population size, lowered reproductive success, or habitat fragmentation. Potential effects on special-status wildlife species associated with individual projects include:

- increased mortality caused by higher numbers of automobiles on new or widened roads;
- direct mortality from the collapse of underground burrows, resulting from soil compaction;
- direct mortality resulting from the movement of equipment and vehicles through the Project area;
- direct mortality resulting from removal of trees with active nests;
- direct mortality or loss of suitable habitat resulting from the trimming or removal of obligate host plants;
- direct mortality resulting from fill of wetlands features;
- loss of breeding and foraging habitat resulting from the filling of seasonal or perennial wetlands;
- loss of breeding, foraging, and refuge habitat resulting from the permanent removal of riparian vegetation;
- loss of suitable habitat for vernal pool invertebrates resulting from the destruction or degradation of vernal pools or seasonal wetlands;
- abandoned eggs or young and subsequent nest failure for special-status nesting birds, including raptors, and other non-special status migratory birds resulting from construction-related noises;
- loss or disturbance of rookeries and other colonial nests;
- loss of suitable foraging habitat for special-status raptor species; and
- loss of migration corridors resulting from the construction of permanent structures or features.

The design process for each improvement will involve a level of field reconnaissance to precisely identify the potential for impacts to special status species and to identify project specific design measures that can be employed to avoid or lessen an impact. Project specific design measures may include alternative designs to avoid habitats that are considered more sensitive and required for special status species. An impact would occur if a project would result in a take of a special status species or their habitat. If a project would in fact result in a take of a special status species or their habitat it may be required to go through a consultation process with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for recommendations to avoid or lessen the impacts to these species and their habitats.

Permits may also be required from the USFWS and/or CDFW, and possibly by the local governments if a project design cannot avoid disturbance to special status species or their habitat. Permits are issued by regulatory agencies with conditions that are designed to mitigate the impact to the extent practicable. The proposed project does not directly cause an impact to special status species and the design process for individual improvements listed in the proposed project would require that each project be consistent with the policies that are established in the Plumas County General Plan for the purpose of protecting biological resources, including special status species that their habitat.

Consistency with the County policies as well as adopted federal and state regulations that protect special-status species, including their habitat and movement corridors, would ensure that appropriate design measures, including avoidance, if appropriate, are incorporated into the design of each improvement project. Because the proposed project is a planning document and

thus, no physical changes will occur to the environment, adoption of the proposed project would not directly impact the environment. There is a possibility that special status species will be affected by a transportation project identified in the proposed project due to the extent of special status species throughout the region. The following mitigation measure would ensure that all future projects are designed to avoid sensitive biological resources to the greatest extent feasible. Where full avoidance is not possible, the participation in pre-established habitat and special status species protection programs would reduce the impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce the impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure 1:*** *Prior to final design approval of RTP projects, take steps to identify and protect any biological resources associated with the project. The implementing agency should retain a qualified biologist to conduct a field reconnaissance of the limits of the project area to identify special status plants, animals, and their habitats, as well as protected natural communities including wetland and terrestrial communities. If the biologist identifies protected biological resources within the limits of the project area, consider alternative designs that seek to avoid and/or minimize impacts to the biological resources. If the project cannot be designed to completely avoid, coordinate with the appropriate regulatory agency (i.e. USFWS, NMFS, CDFW, ACOE) to obtain regulatory permits and implement project-specific mitigation prior to any construction activities.*

Response b-c): The County contains a variety of natural communities that are generally considered sensitive, such as riparian, hardwood forest, conifer forests, streams, rivers, wet meadows, and vernal pools. Streams, rivers, wet meadows, and vernal pools (wetlands and jurisdictional waters) are of high concern because they provide unique aquatic habitat (perennial and ephemeral) for many endemic species, including special-status plants, birds, invertebrates, and amphibians. These aquatic habitats oftentimes qualify as protected wetlands or jurisdictional waters and are protected from disturbance through the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The County contains numerous aquatic habitats that qualify as federally protected wetlands and jurisdictional waters. Section 404 of the CWA requires any project that involves disturbance to a wetland or water of the U.S. to obtain a permit that authorizes the disturbance. If a wetland or jurisdictional water is determined to be present, then a permit must be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to authorize a disturbance to the wetland. Although subsequent improvements may disturb protected wetlands and/or jurisdictional waters, the regulatory process that is established through Section 404 of the CWA ensures that there is "no net loss" of wetlands or jurisdictional waters. If, through the design process, it is determined that an improvement project cannot avoid a wetland or jurisdictional water, then the USACE would require that there be an equal amount of wetland created elsewhere to mitigate any loss of wetland.

The County contains eleven sensitive natural communities including: Deer Migration Seasonal, Deer Fawning Area, Deer Holding Area, Deer Summer Range, Deer Winter Range, Raptor Nesting Area, Raptor Wintering Area, Waterfowl Nesting Area, Waterfowl Wintering Area, River Otter Range, and Other.

Construction activities associated with individual projects will occur across a variety of habitats and such activities could result in the disturbance to the habitat. There is a possibility that natural communities, including wetlands, riparian, sensitive natural communities, will be affected by individual projects.

Detailed plans of the individual projects have not been developed. Consistency with the applicable County policies and federal and state regulations would ensure that appropriate

design measures, including avoidance, if appropriate, are incorporated into the design of each improvement project. Because the proposed project is a planning document and thus, no physical changes will occur to the environment, adoption of the proposed project would not directly impact the environment. Implementation of the previously presented mitigation measures would ensure that all future individual projects are designed to avoid sensitive habitat to the greatest extent feasible. Where full avoidance is not possible, the participation in pre-established habitat protection programs or state/federal permit mitigation programs would offset any potential impacts associated with project implementation. Adherence to the requirements in mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Response d): There are native fish and wildlife species within the County that migrate or utilize movement corridors and nursery sites (i.e. deer fawning area of Lake Davis). Linear transportation improvements can cause fragmentation of habitat where species can no longer easily move through an area. This may occur in cases where a linear transportation improvement includes a center barrier to be erected that suddenly affects the ability of a smaller animal, and sometimes, less mobile species, to cross the linear transportation corridor to areas that they previously frequented. In addition, certain fence designs are barriers to deer movement, particularly to does/fawns. Deer-proof or deer-resistant fences around large acreages in their range and across critical movement corridors result in a significant adverse impact on deer populations. Also, the creation of highways and roads are a source of deer mortality.

Construction and maintenance activities associated with the individual projects could result in the direct loss or indirect disturbance of movement habitats that occur in the County. The design process for each improvement will involve a level of field reconnaissance to precisely identify the potential for impacts to and to identify project specific design measures that can be employed to avoid or lessen an impact. Project specific design measures may include alternative designs to avoid habitats that are considered more sensitive. If a project would in fact result in an impact to migration or nursery habitat it may be required to go through a consultation process with the USFWS and/or CDFW for recommendations to avoid or lessen the impacts to these species and their habitats.

Consistency with the County policies as well as adopted federal and state regulations that protect nursery habitat and movement corridors, would ensure that appropriate design measures, including avoidance, if appropriate, are incorporated into the design of each improvement project. Because the proposed project is a planning document and thus, no physical changes will occur to the environment, adoption of the proposed project would not directly impact the environment.

The individual projects have not been designed or approved. Each project will be designed consistent with the applicable County policies to ensure that appropriate design measures are incorporated into the design of each project. The following mitigation measure would ensure that all future projects are designed to facilitate the movement of wildlife to the greatest extent feasible. Where full design mitigation is not feasible, compliance with state and federal permit requirements would offset any potential impacts associated with project implementation. Adherence to the requirements this mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure 2:*** *Prior to design approval of individual projects, the implementing agency will incorporate economically viable design measures, as applicable and necessary, to allow wildlife (terrestrial and/or aquatic) to move through the transportation corridor, both during construction*

activities and post construction. Potential measures should include appropriately spaced breaks in a center barrier, and other measures that are designed to allow wildlife to move through the transportation corridor.

Response e): The proposed project does not conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. Implementation of the proposed project would have ***no impact*** relative to this issue.

Response f): Plumas County does not have an applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Implementation of the proposed project would have ***no impact*** relative to this issue.

V. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section15064.5?		X		
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?		X		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a): Implementation of RTP projects may occur near or in close vicinity to architectural resources (buildings/structures/features) that are 50 years old or older. Given the age of these resources, it is possible they are historically significant and eligible for listing in the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) or the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As RTP projects are designed and reviewed by local jurisdictions, the RTP projects will undergo technical analysis to evaluate any potential impacts to historical resources within their area of potential effect.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at this planning level is not feasible. However, damage to or destruction of historical resources that are considered significant under local, state, or federal criteria would be a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure that all subsequent RTP projects either avoid known historical resources, or take steps to implement amelioration methods to reduce impacts to known historical resources. This mitigation measure would also require investigations and avoidance methods in the event that a previously undiscovered historical resource is encountered during construction activities. This mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure 3:*** *During environmental review of individual projects, and prior to construction, if architectural resources are deemed as potentially eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources or the National Register of Historic Places as determined by a qualified architectural historian, Plumas County should consider avoidance through project redesign as feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, the historic resource should be formally documented through the use of large-format photography, measured drawings, written architectural descriptions, and historical narratives. The documentation should be entered into the Library of Congress, and archived in the California Historical Resources Information System. In the event of building relocation, ensure that any alterations to significant buildings or structures conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.*

Response b): Implementation of most of the RTP improvements would be constructed within the existing rights-of-way. Improvements and modifications within existing rights-of-way would have less potential to encounter previously unknown archaeological resources relative to projects in undisturbed areas since the former right-of-way areas have already been disturbed. Improvements and modifications within existing rights-of-way still have potential to adversely affect archaeological resources, either directly or indirectly.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at this planning level is not feasible. As RTP projects are designed

and reviewed by local jurisdictions, the RTP projects will undergo technical analysis to evaluate any potential impacts to cultural resources within their area of potential effect. This will include consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission to determine whether known sacred sites are in the project area. If recommended, a qualified archaeologist will be consulted to conduct archaeological surveys. The significance of any resources that are determined to be in the project area will be assessed according to the applicable local, state, and federal significance criteria.

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure that all subsequent RTP projects either avoid known cultural or historical resources, or take steps to implement amelioration methods to reduce impacts to known cultural or historical resources. It would also require investigations and avoidance methods in the event that a previously undiscovered cultural or historical resource is encountered during construction activities. This mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

> ***Mitigation Measure 4:*** *If cultural resources (i.e., prehistoric sites, historic sites, and isolated artifacts and features) are discovered work shall be halted immediately within 50 meters (165 feet) of the discovery, Plumas County shall be notified, and a qualified archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in prehistoric or historical archaeology shall be retained to determine the significance of the discovery.*
>
> *Plumas County shall consider mitigation recommendations presented by the professional archaeologist for any unanticipated discoveries and shall carry out the measures deemed feasible and appropriate. Such measures may include avoidance, preservation in place, excavation, documentation, curation, data recovery, or other appropriate measures.*

Response c): Indications are that humans have occupied Plumas County for at least 10,000 years and it is not always possible to predict where human remains may occur outside of formal burials. Therefore, excavation and construction activities, regardless of depth, may yield human remains that may not be interred in marked, formal burials. Under CEQA, human remains are protected under the definition of archaeological materials as being "any evidence of human activity." Additionally, Public Resources Code Section 5097 has specific stop-work and notification procedures to follow in the event that human remains are inadvertently discovered during Project implementation. Consistency with state law and standard County procedures would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

VI. ENERGY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?			X	
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a), b): In Plumas County, electricity is provided by PG&E, PSREC, and Sierra-Pacific Power. PG&E provides electricity to the western portion of the County. PSREC serves the eastern portion of the County. Sierra Pacific Power provides electricity to a small portion of the southeastern portion of the County. Many residents and businesses in the County also rely on propane gas provided by a number of local franchises, such as Amerigas and Suburban Propane, as an energy source.

The abundance of rivers and streams located in Plumas County not only provide water supply they have also functioned as locations for the generation of hydroelectric power. PG&E operates ten hydroelectric plants on the Feather River. The East Branch North Fork Feather River serves over four million electrical customers through its hydroelectric facilities. Hydroelectric power generated at these facilities is distributed directly to the power grid.

PG&E sponsors several energy conservation programs that include education, solar energy incentives, florescent lighting business program and a weatherization program for low income families. These services are intended to reduce energy consumption in homes through the replacement of inefficient appliances and minor housing repairs, making the home more energy efficient. Consumers also receive valuable educational materials that provide useful energy saving tips and information.

Additional conservation measures can be encouraged through programs and policies that address areas within the County that can potentially reduce energy consumption by reducing wasteful energy consumption practices and habits.

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in new development, so there would be no development related energy needs generated by the proposed project. The transportation related energy needs are largely unchanged given that VMT has only a slight increase, coupled with the fact that fuel efficiency is increasing based on fuel standards that are being phased in over the next decade. Construction emissions will continue as projects are constructed; however, fuel efficiency standards and cleaner fuels for construction equipment are also being phased in and are anticipated to improve over the next decade.

Overall, the proposed project would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project operation of the plan, or during construction of individual projects. Additionally, the proposed project does not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less then significant*** impact relative to this topic.

VII. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	***Potentially Significant Impact***	***Less Than Significant with Mitigation***	***Less Than Significant Impact***	***No Impact***
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
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 direct or indirect 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
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a.i-ii): Plumas County is not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone; however, there are several potentially active faults that pass through the County, including the Almanor Fault, Butt Creek Fault Zone, Indian Valley Fault, and the Mohawk Valley Fault. Additionally, the Honey Lake and Fort Sage Faults are two active faults located east of the County. While these faults are within and near the County and could result in several seismic-related effects (i.e., groundshaking, etc.) to County residents and property, seismic hazard mapping indicates that the County has low seismic hazard potential.

All projects would be required to conduct seismic hazard evaluations and comply with all appropriate Building Code provisions. The County would require individual projects to include appropriate seismic designs to accommodate the potential for seismicity. This standard measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Response a.iii-iv), c): 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. From a regional perspective, the soils located within the County are considered to have a low potential for liquefaction. The highest risk for liquefaction is expected along rivers, creeks, and drainages within the County.

There are areas throughout the County that are prone to landslides. A higher probability of landslides in some areas is predominately based on the steeper slopes. There will be an ongoing potential for these steep areas of the County to be or become unstable and result in landslides at some time.

Plumas County would require each improvement project to have a specific geotechnical study prepared and incorporated into the improvement design. The geotechnical study would identify specific soil conditions, surface and subsurface drainage capability, slope steepness, and other factors that may contribute to landslide risk as well as soil inclusions that pose a higher risk of liquefaction. The geotechnical study would provide recommendations for mitigating any potential risk associated with site specific conditions. Implementation of the RTP itself would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact on soil erosion.

Responses b): There are areas throughout the County that have steeper slopes where the potential for loss of topsoil and erosion is relatively high. Some of the individual projects would involve some land clearing, mass grading, and other ground-disturbing activities that could temporarily increase soil erosion rates during and shortly after project construction. Construction-related erosion could result in the loss of a substantial amount of nonrenewable topsoil and could adversely affect water quality in nearby surface waters.

The RWQCB requires a project specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be prepared for each project that disturbs an area one acre or larger. The SWPPPs will include project specific best management measures that are designed to control drainage and erosion. Furthermore, each individual project will include detailed project specific drainage plans that control storm water runoff and erosion, both during and after construction. The SWPPP and the project specific drainage plans would reduce the potential for erosion. Implementation of the RTP itself would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact on soil erosion.

Responses d): 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 other structures unless special engineering design is incorporated into the project plans.

Each individual project would be required to have a specific geotechnical study prepared and incorporated into the design. The geotechnical study would identify the specific soil conditions that may contribute to soil expansion. Based on specific findings at each locality, the geotechnical engineer will recommend detailed engineering measures that are necessary to reduce the risks associated with soil expansion. Implementation of project specific geotechnical engineering measures would reduce the risks from soil expansion to a reasonable level for

individual projects. Implementation of the RTP itself would result in a ***less-than-significant*** impact on soil expansion.

Responses e): The RTP would not result in the generation of sewer water or the expansion of septic infrastructure. Implementation of the proposed project would have ***no impact*** on this environmental issue.

Responses f): Most of the RTP improvements would be constructed within the existing rights-of-way, which is generally considered to have less potential to encounter previously unknown paleontological resources relative to projects in undisturbed/undeveloped areas. However, improvements and modifications within existing rights-of-way still have the potential to damage or destroy undiscovered paleontological resources especially during deeper excavations.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at this planning level is not feasible. However, damage to or destruction of paleontological resources that are considered significant under local, state, or federal criteria would be a significant impact.

During environmental review of RTP projects, Plumas County will take steps to identify and protect paleontological resources. When the project scope and/or location indicate potential impacts to paleontological resources, a qualified paleontologist would be retained to identify resources and potential impacts and to determine appropriate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. This is considered a ***less than significant*** impact.

VIII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*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 gasses?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a) and b): The County GHG inventory using a base year of 2005, totals 10,132,302 MMBtu, with approximately 32% generated by the transportation sector. The PCTC's ability to address and mitigate climate change impacts is limited primarily to policy and funding decisions related to planned roadway and alternative transportation improvements. As described above, the combustion of fossil fuels during vehicle operations is the primary source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in California, and it represents about a third of the GHG emissions in the County. GHG emissions also result from the carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous dioxide that are released during the combustion of gasoline and diesel fuel in construction equipment, vehicles, buses, trucks, and trains; and the use of natural gas to power transit buses and other vehicles.

Historical and current global GHG emissions are known by the State and the global scientific community to be causing global climate change, and future increases in GHG emissions associated with the transportation sector could exacerbate climate change and contribute to the significant adverse environmental effects described previously. Furthermore, increased GHG emissions associated with the transportation sector could impact implementation of the State's mandatory requirement under AB 32 to reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020.

The effectiveness of efforts by the RTPA to provide transportation alternatives and to implement Transportation Demand Management and Transportation System Management policies and strategies can be measured in terms of reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or expected growth in VMT. VMT reductions correlate directly with reductions in GHG emissions. Caltrans reports VMT by County on an annual basis. This tends to be a poor data source primarily because it is based on a small sampling of vehicle counts at specific locations and then extrapolated to reflect the entire County. The development of a network travel demand model would greatly enhance the County's ability to forecast VMT based on growth and development that does occur within the County's incorporated City of Portola and other communities.

Plumas County has experienced slow growth in population and employment over the past two decades and is forecast to continue this trend into the future. The County will continue to monitor population and employment and VMT growth consistent with the RTP, RTP performance measures, and County and City General Plans. This planning document recognizes that TDM and alternative mobility options, including walking, biking and transit require coordination with land use decisions and improved infrastructure. To this degree, the goals and policies in the RTP are still consistent with the County's General Plan to provide a balanced multi- modal transportation system that includes non-auto choices for access and mobility.

Caltrans, the County, the City of Portola and tribal governments are committed to implementing policies and strategies to reduce reliance on the automobile where possible.

As discussed above, implementation of the RTP will not conflict with AB 32 or SB 375. Furthermore, the RTP does not result in any significant amount of VMT or population growth. Therefore, this is impact is considered ***less than significant***.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?			X	
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?			X	
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a): Construction of the individual RTP projects may involve the transportation, use, and/or disposal of hazardous materials, which may involve the use of equipment that contains hazardous materials (e.g., solvents and fuels, diesel-fueled equipment), or the transportation of excavated soil and/or groundwater containing contaminants from areas that are identified as being contaminated. However, the transportation of hazardous materials is heavily regulated and monitored by federal, state, and local regulations and policies. All transportation of hazardous materials, if any, will be required to comply with all existing regulations and policies. Compliance with all existing regulations and policies would ensure that the impact would be ***less than significant***, and no additional mitigation is required.

Response b):

Hazardous Solvents and Architectural Coatings: The construction and maintenance of individual RTP projects would involve the use of fuels, solvents, architectural coatings, and other chemicals that may be considered hazardous if not properly used. Typically, "leftover"

materials are used on other projects when possible. In any case, the handling and disposal of these products would be governed according to regulations enforced by local fire departments, Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPAs), the State Division of Occupational Safety and Health, and the Department of Toxic Substances Control. In addition, regulations under the federal and state Clean Water Act require contractors to avoid allowing the release of materials into surface waters. Compliance with the existing regulatory environment would ensure that this impact would be ***less than significant***.

Asbestos: The construction of RTP projects within areas that are known to have naturally occurring asbestos, or areas where asbestos is contained with existing structures, could lead to the disturbance and release of asbestos fibers. Earthmoving, excavation, and demolitions of materials containing asbestos requires monitoring to ensure that they are not used as soil or fill materials, and that they are properly disposed of in accordance with federal and state regulations.

Conclusion: Based upon the regional nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at an RTP planning level is not feasible. The implementing agency of each RTP project will conduct appropriate project-level assessments and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. If asbestos is deemed present, an Asbestos Hazard Dust Mitigation Plan would be prepared to ensure that adequate dust control and asbestos hazard mitigation measures are implemented during project construction. At the project level environmental review, any applicable mitigation measures presented in the Air Quality section of the environmental impact report would ensure that this potential impact is reduced to a ***less than significant*** level.

Response c): Because of the regional nature of the transportation improvements, some will inevitably be located within ¼ mile of a school. Hazardous materials used in construction of an RTP project in the vicinity of a school, or other sensitive receptors such as hospitals and residences, could be accidentally released. In the event of a hazardous materials spill or release, notification and cleanup operations would be performed in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local regulations and policies, including hazard mitigation plans. Compliance with all existing regulations, policies, and hazard mitigation plans would ensure that the impact would be ***less than significant***, and no additional mitigation is required.

Response d): Any construction activities on, through, or adjacent to contaminated sites could lead to a disturbance and release of hazardous materials. The regulatory agencies, including federal, state, and local agencies, have identified sites that are or were contaminated at some point. Additionally, these agencies continue to pursue investigating properties that could potentially be contaminated and all information is maintained in a database system. Based upon the regional nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at an RTP planning level is not feasible. As a standard best management practice, the implementing agency of each RTP project will conduct appropriate project-level environmental review and will be responsible for consideration of mitigation measures for significant effects on the environment. This would involve the preparation of a Phase 1 ESA, and possibly a Phase 2, to determine if the individual site is contaminated. Implementation of the this standard practice would ensure that this potential impact is reduced to a ***less than significant*** level.

Response e): Hazards related with airports are typically grouped into two categories: air hazards and ground hazards. Air hazards jeopardize the safety of an airborne aircraft and expose passengers, pilots and crews to danger. Examples of air hazards include tall structures, glare-producing objects, bird and wildlife attractants, radio waves from communication centers,

or other features that have the potential to interfere with take-off or landing procedures, posing a risk to aircraft. Ground hazards jeopardize the safety of current and future residents and/or workers in the vicinity of an airport. The most obvious ground hazard is a crash, which may produce a serious, immediate risk to those residing in or using areas adjacent to the airport. Most accidents occur during take-off and landing. Therefore, the higher the density around an airport, including transportation facilities, the higher the risk associated with this type of hazard.

While there are no commercial airports in Plumas County, there are three airports owned and operated by Plumas County, County airports consist of Gansner Field in Quincy, Rogers Field in Chester and Nervino Airport in Beckwourth. Heliport facilities are located at the Plumas District Hospital in Quincy, the Eastern Plumas Hospital in Portola, and the Care Flight facility that operates from the Nervino Airport. The closest commercial airport is Reno/Tahoe International Airport in Reno, located approximately 90 miles from Quincy and 48 miles from Portola.

- Gansner Field is a publicly-owned airport located 1 mile north of Quincy. The airport is owned by Plumas County and maintained by the Plumas County Facilities Office. Fifteen aircrafts are based at Gansner Field; 14 single-engine planes and one ultralight. Aircraft operations average 25 operations per day. In 2017, 47% of flight traffic at Gansner Field was local general aviation; 46% of air traffic was transient general aviation, 7% was air taxi, and 1% was military.

- Rogers Field is a publicly-owned airport located 2 miles southwest of Chester. The airport is owned by Plumas County and maintained by the Plumas County Facilities Office. Aircraft operations average 43 operations per day. In 2017, 54% of flight traffic at Rogers Field was transient general aviation; 41% of air traffic was local general aviation, and 4% was air taxi.

- Nervino Airport is a publicly-owned airport located 1 mile east of Beckwourth. The airport is owned by Plumas County and maintained by the Plumas County Facilities Office. Fifteen aircrafts are based at Nervino Airport; 14 single-engine planes and one ultralight. Aircraft operations average 33 operations per day. In 2016, 67% of flight traffic at Nervino Airport was transient general aviation and 33% was local general aviation.

Some of the RTP projects include improvements to the existing airports, and some are roadway improvements located within close proximity to airports. These improvements are transportation related and do not create residences, or other habitable structures within proximity to the airport, and they do not conflict with the airport land use plans within County.

The 2020 RTP would not impact people residing or working within 2 miles of an airport. Improvements to transportation facilities near airport land uses airport facilities, is expected to improve the safety conditions at these airports through increased access and response. Therefore, there is ***no impact***.

Response f): The individual RTP improvement projects would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The RTP would improve transportation systems throughout the County, which is expected to improve the emergency response and evacuation routes throughout the County. Therefore, there is ***no impact***.

Response g): The risk of wildfire is related to a variety of parameters, including fuel loading (vegetation), fire weather (winds, temperatures, humidity levels and fuel moisture contents) and topography (degree of slope). Steep slopes contribute to fire hazard by intensifying the effects of wind and making fire suppression difficult. Fuels such as grass are highly flammable because they have a high surface area to mass ratio and require less heat to reach the ignition point, while fuels such as trees have a lower surface area to mass ratio and require more heat to reach the ignition point.

Wildfires are a major hazard in the State of California. Wild fires burn natural vegetation on developed and undeveloped lands and include timber, brush, woodland, and grass fires. While low intensity wild fires have a role in the County's ecosystem, wild 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.

Plumas County has areas with the appropriate fuel loading, and topography for wildfire. When this is combined with the warm and dry summers with high temperatures the risk of wildlife increases substantially. Most wildland fires are human caused, so areas with easy human access to land with the appropriate fire parameters generally result in an increased risk of fire.

The individual RTP improvement projects would not result in the construction of structures that would be occupied by humans; therefore, it would not expose people or structures to a significant risk involving wild fires. The RTP provides for improvements to transportation systems throughout the County, which is expected to improve the ability for fire protection services to access areas that have a high wild fire risk rating. Therefore, there is ***no impact***.

X. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?		X		
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?			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 or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
(i) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;		X		
(ii) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;		X		
(iii) 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; or		X		
(iv) Impede or redirect flood flows?		X		
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?		X		
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?		X		

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a), e): *Construction-Related Water Quality Impacts:* Grading, excavation, removal of vegetation cover, and loading activities associated with construction activities could temporarily increase runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. Construction activities also could result in soil compaction and wind erosion effects that could adversely affect soils and reduce the revegetation potential at construction sites and staging areas.

As required by the Clean Water Act, each specific improvement project will require an approved Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes best management practices for grading, and preservation of topsoil. A SWPPP is not required if the project will disturb less than one acre. SWPPPs are designed to control storm water quality degradation to the extent practicable using best management practices during and after construction.

The implementing agency will submit the SWPPP with a Notice of Intent to the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to obtain a General Permit. The RWQCB is an agency responsible for reviewing the SWPPP with the Notice of Intent, prior to issuance of a General

Permit for the discharge of storm water during construction activities. The RWQCB accepts General Permit applications (with the SWPPP and Notice of Intent) after specific projects have been approved by the lead agency. The lead agency for each specific project that is larger than one acre is required to obtain a General Permit for discharge of storm water during construction activities prior to commencing construction (per the Clean Water Act).

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at this planning level is not feasible. However, each RTP project will include detailed project specific drainage plans that control storm water runoff and erosion, both during and after construction. The Regional Water Quality Control Board will require a project specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be prepared for each transportation improvement that disturbs an area one acre or larger. The SWPPPs will include project specific best management measures that are designed to control drainage and erosion. The implementing agency will be required to coordinate the improvements with the RWQCB, Plumas County, and other applicable agencies, and obtain the necessary permits. The implementing agency will also be required to develop projects consistent with all relevant water control plans and groundwater management plans. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would ensure that the RTP would have a ***less than significant*** impact from these issues.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 6: *Comply with NPDES General Construction Permit requirements. To reduce or eliminate construction-related water quality effects, the implementing agency will ensure that transportation improvement projects comply with the requirements of the NPDES General Construction Permit. Project implementation agencies are required to obtain coverage under the General Construction Permit before the onset of any construction activities, where the disturbed area is 1 acre or greater in size.*

A SWPPP will be developed by a qualified engineer or erosion control specialist in accordance with the NPDES General Construction Permit requirements. The SWPPP will be implemented prior to the issuance of any grading permit before construction. The SWPPP will be kept on site during construction activity and will be made available upon request to representatives of the RWQCB.

Compliance and coverage under the NPDES General Construction Permit will require controls of pollutant discharges that utilize BMPs and technology to reduce erosion and sediments to meet water quality standards. BMPs may consist of a wide variety of measures taken to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff from the construction site. Measures may include, temporary erosion control measures (such as silt fences, staked straw bales/wattles, silt/sediment basins and traps, check dams, geofabric, sandbag dikes, and temporary revegetation or other ground cover) will be employed to control erosion from disturbed areas.

Final selection of BMPs will be subject to approval by the implementing agency. The implementing agency will verify that an NOI has been filed with the SWRCB, and a SWPPP has been developed before allowing construction to begin.

Mitigation Measure 7: *Implement a Spill Prevention and Control Program. As part of requiring compliance with the NPDES General Construction Permit, the implementing agency and its agents will develop and implement a spill prevention and control program to minimize the potential for, and effects from, spills of hazardous, toxic, or petroleum substances during all construction activities. The program will be completed before any construction activities begin.*

Mitigation Measure 8: *Implement measures to maintain water quality after construction. The project implementing agencies will implement source and treatment control measures according to the Plumas County Stormwater Quality Program. General site design control measures are required to minimize*

the volume and rate of stormwater runoff discharge from the project site. General site design control measures incorporated into the project design can include:

- *conserving natural areas;*
- *protecting slopes and channels;*
- *minimizing impervious areas;*
- *storm drain identification, and appropriate messaging and signing; and*
- *minimizing effective imperviousness through the use of turf buffers and/or grass-lined channels, if feasible.*

In addition, projects must include treatment control measures, if possible and when feasible, to remove pollutants from stormwater runoff prior to discharge to the storm drain system or receiving water. Treatment control measures may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- *Vegetated buffer strip*
- *Vegetated swale*
- *Extended detention basin*
- *Wet pond*
- *Constructed wetland*
- *Detention basin/sand filter*
- *Porous pavement detention*
- *Porous landscape detention*
- *Infiltration basin*
- *Infiltration trench*
- *Media filter*
- *Retention/irrigation*
- *Proprietary control device*

Selection and implementation of these measures would be based on a project-by-project basis depending on project size and stormwater treatment needs.

Dewatering Water Quality Impacts: Some RTP projects, such overpasses, underpasses, grade separations, highway interchanges, and other rail crossing structures could require excavation below the ground surface or support structures or foundations secured deep into the ground. Projects that excavate or secure foundations deep in the ground may encounter groundwater. Depending on the location, trenching and excavation associated with these projects may reach depths that can expose the water table and create a direct path to the groundwater basin for contaminants to enter the groundwater system. Primary construction-related contaminants that could reach groundwater would include oil and grease, and construction-related hazardous materials and dewatering effluent.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at this planning level is not feasible. However, each transportation RTP project will include detailed project specific geotechnical engineering that would identify the groundwater levels and the need for dewatering. If dewatering was deemed necessary after the appropriate engineering study then the implementing agency would obtain a Dewatering Permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board and comply with provisions for dewatering. The implementing agency would also need to obtain an NPDES permit and Waste Discharge Requirement before discharging any dewatered effluent to surface water. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would ensure that the RTP would have a ***less than significant*** impact from these issues.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 9*: Comply with provisions for dewatering. Before discharging any dewatered effluent to surface water, the project implementation agency will obtain an NPDES permit and Waste Discharge Requirement from the RWQCB and/or the Lahontan RWQCB, as appropriate. Depending on the volume and characteristics of the discharge, coverage under the NPDES General Construction Permit may be permissible. If coverage under the General Construction Permit is not allowed, the project will conform to requirements of the General Dewatering Permit, issued by the RWQCB and/or other applicable agencies. The project implementation agencies will design and implement measures as necessary so that the discharge limits identified in the relevant permit are met.*

Response b): Individual RTP projects, such as road widenings, interchange reconstruction, railway crossings, and other projects would result in new impervious surfaces and could reduce rainwater infiltration and groundwater recharge. Infiltration rates vary depending on the overlying soil types. In general, sandy soils have higher infiltration rates and can contribute to significant amounts of ground water recharge; clay soils tend to have lower percolation potentials; and impervious surfaces such as pavement significantly reduce infiltration capacity and increase surface water runoff. The amount of new pavement and the extent to which it affects infiltration depends on the site-specific soil type. Projects located in urban areas would have less of an impact than projects converting open lands and spaces.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. However, many of the individual RTP projects are located in urban areas and along existing highways, streets, and roads in which most of the surfaces are already paved or impervious. In addition, extensive storm drainage systems present in these areas currently intercept rainfall and runoff waters, thus limiting the amount of groundwater recharge that occurs. Each project will include detailed project specific drainage plans that control storm water runoff, both during and after construction. The drainage plan will include project specific best management measures that are designed to allow for natural recharge and infiltration of stormwater. Implementation of the RTP would have a ***less than significant*** impact from these issues.

Response c.i-iv): Individual RTP projects would create new impervious surfaces. This would result in an incremental reduction in the amount of natural soil surfaces available for infiltration of rainfall and runoff, potentially generating additional runoff during storm events. In addition, the increase in impervious surfaces, along with the increase in surface water runoff, could increase the non-point source discharge of pollutants. Anticipated runoff contaminants include sediment, pesticides, oil and grease, nutrients, metals, bacteria, and trash. Contributions of these contaminants to stormwater and non-stormwater runoff would degrade the quality of receiving waters. During the dry season, vehicles and other urban activities release contaminants onto the impervious surfaces, where they can accumulate until the first storm event. During this initial storm event, or first flush, the concentrated pollutants would be transported via runoff to stormwater drainage systems. Contaminated runoff waters could flow into the stormwater drainage systems that discharge into rivers, agricultural ditches, sloughs, and channels and ultimately could degrade the water quality of any of these water bodies.

Additionally, some of the RTP projects could potentially alter surface drainage patterns as a result of directly altering flow patterns, or placing structures in a floodway, all of which could yield increased amounts of stormwater runoff and/or redirect flood flows. The construction activities associated with RTP projects, such as road widening, interchange reconstruction, railway crossings, and other projects that convert permeable surfaces or install permanent structures would require stormwater drainage management measures to avoid flooding impacts. The existing storm drainage network in Plumas County may not have sufficient

capacity to convey the additional runoff from the individual RTP projects. If the storm drainage network is not appropriately designed it could be overwhelmed during a large storm event and result in flooding.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at the program level is not feasible. As previously discussed, the implementing agency would be also be required to obtain permits from the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Fish and Wildlife if any work is performed within a waterway. Each RTP project will also include detailed project specific floodplain and drainage studies that assess the drainage characteristics and flood risks so that an appropriate storm drainage plan can be prepared to control storm water runoff, both during and after construction. The drainage plan will ultimately include project specific best management measures that are designed to allow for natural recharge and infiltration of stormwater. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would ensure that the RTP would have a ***less than significant*** impact from these issues.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 10*: Conduct project-level drainage studies. As part of the infrastructure plan, the project implementation agencies and/or their contractors will conduct a drainage study. This study will address the following topics:*

- *A calculation of pre-development runoff conditions and post-development runoff scenarios using appropriate engineering methods. This analysis will evaluate potential changes to runoff through specific design criteria, and account for increased surface runoff.*
- *An assessment of existing drainage facilities within the project area, and an inventory of necessary upgrades, replacements, redesigns, and/or rehabilitation, including the sizing of on-site stormwater detention features and pump stations.*
- *A description of the proposed maintenance program for the onsite drainage system.*
- *Standards for drainage systems to be installed on a project/parcel-specific basis.*
- *Proposed design measures to ensure structures are not located within 100-year floodplain areas.*

Drainage systems will be designed in accordance with the County's, Flood Control Agency's, and other applicable flood control design criteria. As a performance standard, measures to be implemented from those studies will provide for no net increase in peak stormwater discharge relative to current conditions, ensure that 100-year flooding and its potential impacts are maintained at or below current levels, and that people and structures are not exposed to additional flood risk.

Mitigation Measure 11*: Avoid restriction of flood flows. Proposed projects requiring federal approval or funding will comply with Executive Order 11988 for floodplain management. Projects will avoid incompatible floodplain development designs, they will restore and preserve the natural and beneficial floodplain values, and they will maintain consistency with the standards and criteria of the National Flood Insurance Program. In addition, a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) will be prepared and submitted to FEMA where unavoidable construction would occur within 100-year floodplains. The LOMR will include revised local base flood elevations for projects constructed within flood prone areas. Potential impacts due to flooding as a result of RTP projects are assumed to be alleviated through the FEMA LOMR approval process.*

Mitigation Measure 12*: Avoid project dewatering. Project designs that require continual de-watering activities for the life of the projects will be avoided if possible. Due to the potential for flooding and destabilizing conditions, project implementation agencies will choose project designs that do not require continual dewatering, if suitable project alternatives exist. Project alternatives may include construction of overpasses, as opposed to below-grade underpasses, which would avoid interception with groundwater.*

Response d): The proposed project is not located in a tsunami zone. However, the potential for flood hazards and seiches exist within the planning area. Flood hazards and seiches could generate a potential hazard when they cause a levee or dam to fail. While it would be difficult to determine when and where levees or dams may fail, inundation of buildings and structures and personal injury or death could result. The proposed projects may create structures or obstructions to flood flows from levee or dam failures. However, RTP projects constructed within areas subject to flooding due to dam failure, as mapped by the California and Plumas County Offices of Emergency Services, would be built following standard building codes and federal, state, and local regulations; all of which would be adequate to protect against further personal injury or death. Proposed RTP projects may cause flood flows to expand to areas not previously mapped as an inundation area under levee or dam failure scenarios. This would result in a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measures

Mitigation Measure 13*: Design projects to pass flows in the event of levee or dam failure. If the proposed project would have the potential to impede or redirect flows from a levee or dam failure, such that there would be less than a one percent chance that flooding would extend to areas not previously mapped as inundation areas, the project applicant will redesign the project, to the maximum extent practicable, such that the site would exhibit pre-project inundation conditions. This may be achieved through incorporation of culverts or bridges into the project design. The project applicant would consult with the California and Plumas County Offices of Emergency Services to ensure that the flooding risks of pre-project conditions would not increase.*

XI. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Physically divide an established community?		X		
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?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a): The majority of RTP projects would involve transportation system improvements to existing facilities, which would mostly occur within or in close proximity to existing rights-of-way. Some RTP projects will involve new facilities that will occur within or adjacent to existing communities. In many cases, improvements to facilities will occur where communities are already physically divided by existing facilities, including highways, roadways, and intersections. The RTP is intended to improve inter- and intra-regional connectivity and new or improved land use linkages. However, specific projects have the potential to divide existing contiguous land uses. Because these potential improvement projects could occur within the developed areas, communities could be affected.

Because the proposed project is a planning document and thus, no physical changes will occur to the environment, adoption of the proposed project would not directly impact the environment. It is assumed that RTP projects that affect roads and interchanges present the greatest potential for impacts regarding the division of an established community. All RTP projects will be designed to maintain the cohesiveness of the existing communities to the greatest extent feasible. Where full design mitigation is not feasible, modifications would be incorporated into the design to minimize the impacts associated with project implementation. Adherence to the requirements of County policies and standard measures would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Response b): Plumas County and the City of Portola have each adopted a General Plan to guide land use and development decisions, as well as circulation patterns to support the land uses within their respective jurisdiction. The RTP is not a land use planning document, and does not establish, or cause changes to land uses or zoning within these jurisdictions. All land use and zoning decisions within the RTP's planning area fall under the jurisdiction of Plumas County or the City of Portola. The RTP is designed as a system of transportation improvements that support circulation and land use policy that have been made by these jurisdictions, and which are reflected in their respective General Plans and Zoning ordinances.

The RTP, being that it is a broad planning process covering the entire County, involves many government agencies that maintain a variety of plans and policies, some of which are aimed at avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Some of the agencies that operate in Plumas County include: Caltrans, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Susanville Indian Rancheria, Greenville Rancheria, Feather River College, California Highway Patrol, Almanor Recreation and Park District, Central Plumas Recreation and Park District, Eastern Plumas Recreation and Park District, Plumas-Eureka State Park Association, Plumas National Forest, Lassen National Forest, Cal-OES, Union Pacific Railroad, Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, and a variety of Chamber of Commerce's and businesses. Each organization has an interest in the County, which drove a public process for this project. Point of contacts for agencies with an interest in the RTP

were tracked in a stakeholder list throughout the duration of the RTP development and were invited to outreach meetings to become involved in the RTP development so that their plans and policies could be considered in the RTP. Letters were sent by postage and by e-mail in the beginning of the RTP development process to neighboring Counties' transportation planning agencies. Agency contacts were also alerted of the option to become involved in the RTP and provide input or recommended projects through a variety of other methods, such as the digital questionnaire and a comment feedback form available on the project website. The intent of engaging these agencies was to ensure that the RTP was consistent with their plans and policies. There have been no agencies that have identified a conflict with their plans or policies through the public process.

The RTP transportation improvements respond to growth, safety, maintenance, mobility, and connectivity issues for the transportation system throughout the region. The RTP transportation improvements are multi-modal, meaning they cover vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, transit, air travel, etc. Each individual RTP project will be evaluated on a project-specific level during the design and engineering stage of the process. This will include a review for conformance with the applicable General Plan. The RTP itself would not result in significant conflicts with plans, policies, and regulations adopted to mitigate an environmental effect. Implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact relative to this issue.

XII. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*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	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a-b): Mineral resources are found in Plumas County, which has a long history of mining gold and copper. Mining has been declining in more recent years, but remains as an active industry today.

Some individual RTP improvements may be located in the vicinity of land that that contains mineral resources. Implementation of the improvements would not directly cause changes resulting in conversion of any mining operations into a different use. Additionally, the individual improvement projects will improve transportation systems in the County, which would provide a beneficial impact for mining operations. Implementation of the proposed project will have a ***less than significant*** impact on mineral resources.

XIII. NOISE

Would the project result in:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*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?		X		
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?		X		
c) For a project located within 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, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a):

General Construction Activities: The proposed RTP does not directly cause a noise impact, although it could indirectly have noise impacts as a result of development and operation of subsequent RTP projects during both the short and long-term. A majority of the proposed improvements identified in the RTP, with the exception of changes in transit operations, transportation demand management, and regional planning, would require some level of construction. Larger construction-related projects, such as interchange improvements, bridge improvements, and road realignment and widening projects, would be of particular concern given the noise and ground-borne vibration generation potential of these projects.

Noise levels typically associated with roadway construction equipment and distances to predicted noise contours are summarized in Table NOISE-1.

Table NOISE-1: Construction Equipment Noise Levels

EQUIPMENT	*TYPICAL NOISE LEVEL (dBA) 50 FEET FROM SOURCE*		*DISTANCE TO NOISE CONTOURS (FEET, dBA L_{EQ})*		
	L_{MAX}	*L_{EQ}*	*70 DBA*	*65 DBA*	*60 DBA*
Air Compressor	80	76	105	187	334
Auger/Rock Drill	85	78	133	236	420
Backhoe/Front End Loader	80	76	105	187	334
Blasting	94	74	83	149	265
Boring Hydraulic Jack/Power Unit	80	77	118	210	374
Compactor (Ground)	80	73	74	133	236
Concrete Batch Plant	83	75	94	167	297
Concrete Mixer Truck	85	81	187	334	594
Concrete Mixer (Vibratory)	80	73	74	133	236
Concrete Pump Truck	82	75	94	167	297
Concrete Saw	90	83	236	420	748
Crane	85	77	118	210	374
Dozer/Grader/Excavator/Scraper	85	81	187	334	594

EQUIPMENT	*TYPICAL NOISE LEVEL (dBA) 50 FEET FROM SOURCE*		*DISTANCE TO NOISE CONTOURS (FEET, dBA L_{EQ})*		
Drill Rig Truck	84	77	118	210	374
Generator	82	79	149	265	472
Gradall	85	81	187	334	594
Hydraulic Break Ram	90	80	167	297	529
Jack Hammer	85	78	133	236	420
Impact Hammer/Hoe Ram (Mounted)	90	83	236	420	748
Pavement Scarifier/Roller	85	78	133	236	420
Paver	85	82	210	374	667
Pile Driver (Impact/Vibratory)	95	88	420	748	1,330
Pneumatic Tools	85	82	210	374	667
Pumps	77	74	83	149	265
Truck (Dump/Flat Bed)	84	80	167	297	529

SOURCES: FHWA 2006

As indicated, maximum intermittent noise levels associated with construction equipment typically range from approximately 77 to 95 dBA L_{max} at 50 feet. Pile driving and demolition activities involving the use of pavement breakers and jackhammers, and are among the noisiest of activities associated with transportation improvement and construction projects. Depending on equipment usage and duration, average-hourly noise levels at this same distance typically range from approximately 73 to 88 dBA L_{eq}. Distances to predicted noise contours would, likewise, vary depending on the specific activities conducted and equipment usage. Delivery vehicles, construction employee vehicle trips, and haul truck trips may also contribute to overall construction noise levels.

Increases in ambient noise levels associated with construction projects located near sensitive land uses can result in increased levels of annoyance, as well as potential violation of local noise standards. Construction activities occurring during the more noise-sensitive nighttime hours would be of particular concern, given the potential for increased sleep disruption. Impacts to sensitive receptors resulting from proposed transportation improvement and construction projects would depend on several factors, such as the equipment used, surrounding land uses, shielding provided by intervening structures and terrain, and duration of construction activities.

The following mitigation measure would limit construction to the daytime hours, to the extent feasible, and would require equipment to be properly maintained and muffled. Furthermore, this mitigation measure provides resident notification requirements, and measures to resolve noise complaints. Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOISE-1 would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Rail: Train noise from freight cars, crossings, and whistles generate noise in the county. The Union Pacific Railroad and Burlington Northern / Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad are dominant elements in the physical form of the County, but only play a minor role in the local transportation system. The County's two major rail lines, one running along State Route 70 that connects Oroville and Roseville to the west with Salt Lake City to the east. BNSF intersects the aforementioned line near Keddie. The BNSF line travels north along Lake Almanor into Lassen County. The rail lines are completely dedicated to freight and the local service is limited to shipping and receiving. Nonetheless, the rail line through the Feather River Canyon is a major trans-sierra route and recognized as one of the more scenic transportation corridors. Although passenger service was discontinued in the 1970s, the route is occasionally used for chartered passenger trains.

An abandoned spur rail connects the primary rail from Crescent Mills to Chester. This line was formerly used in the timber industry and is currently being removed.

There are approximately 28 at-grade rail crossings within Plumas County.

The potential for more trips on the existing rail lines is not anticipated, but if there is any increase it would not result in substantial and permanent noise increases at sensitive receptors since the noise from additional trains would be sporadic events; the rail lines predate most of the existing development, and the County has accounted for the existence of these tracks in their land use planning.

Mitigation Measure NOISE-1 would require a project-level noise evaluation for each RTP project that is located near a sensitive receptor. The noise evaluation would identify areas that would have elevated noise levels as a result of the project and require measures to attenuate the noise to an acceptable level. Such measures could include constructing earth berms, sound walls, establishing buffers, or improving acoustical insulation in residential units. Implementation of Mitigation Measure NOISE-1 would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Operational Traffic: The 2020 RTP does not directly cause a noise impact, although it could indirectly have noise impacts as a result of development and operation of subsequent RTP projects during both the short and long-term. While many of these projects will likely have no effect on the operational noise generation of the facility, some improvement projects, which involve new facilities or capacity enhancements for existing facilities, could affect noise-sensitive land uses. Noise-sensitive land uses could be exposed to noise in excess of normally acceptable noise levels or increases in noise as a result of the operation of expanded or new transportation facilities (i.e., increased traffic resulting from roadway capacity improvements, new transit facilities, etc.).

Plumas County and incorporated communities have adopted Noise Elements of their General Plans that establish noise-related policies that, when implemented, protect sensitive receptors from significant noise. The policies that are laid out in the Noise Element(s) are consistent with federal and state regulations designed to protect noise sensitive receptors. During the design process, the implementing agency would be responsible for ensuring that the project is designed consistent with adopted policies and state and federal regulations. Although the policy and regulatory controls for noise-related impacts are in place in the planning area, subsequent improvement projects would result in an increase in traffic noise levels. For most projects, consistency with the adopted policies and established regulations would help to reduce exposure of sensitive receptors to transportation noise levels. In addition, the following mitigation measure would require a project-level noise evaluation for each RTP project that is located near a sensitive receptor. The noise evaluation would identify areas that would have elevated noise levels as a result of the project and require measures to attenuate the noise to an acceptable level. Such measures could include constructing earth berms, sound walls, establishing buffers, or improving acoustical insulation in residential units. Implementation of this mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure 14*: Prior to approval of new construction projects adjacent to noise-sensitive uses, the implementing agency shall perform a project-level noise evaluation. The implementing agencies shall consider the following measures:*

- *Construct vegetative earth berms with mature trees and landscaping to attenuate roadway noise on adjacent residences or other sensitive use, and /or sound walls or other similar sound-attenuating buffers, as appropriate.*

- *Design projects to maximize the distance between noise-sensitive land uses and new roadway lanes, roadways, rail lines, transit centers, park-and-ride lots, and other new noise generating facilities.*

- *Establish speed limits and limits on hours of operation of rail and transit systems.*

Response b): Ground-borne vibration and noise levels associated with highway traffic is typically considered to pose no threat to buildings and potential annoyance to people would be minimal. Traffic vibration levels are typically highest associated with truck passbys. Automobile traffic normally generates vibration peaks of one-fifth to one-tenth that of trucks. Based on measurements conducted by Caltrans, even the highest truck generated vibrations, which were measured at approximately 16 feet from the centerline of the near travel-lane, were not found to exceed 0.08 in/sec. This level coincides with the maximum recommended "safe level" for ruins and historical structures.

Construction activities would, however, require the use of off-road equipment which could adversely affect nearby land uses. The highest ground-borne vibration levels would be generated by the use of pile drivers and vibratory rollers. Ground-borne vibration levels associated with proposed construction improvement projects could potentially exceed recommended criteria for structural damage and/or human annoyance (0.2 and 0.1 in/sec ppv, respectively) at nearby existing land uses. As a result, exposure to construction-generated ground-borne vibration levels would be considered ***potentially significant***.

Mitigation Measure NOISE-2 would limit construction to the daytime hours, to the extent feasible, and would require use of equipment with reduced equipment noise/vibration levels, to the extent practical. The level of mitigation would be project and site specific and would include measures normally required by Caltrans, as well as requirements under the General Plan Noise Elements and Noise Ordinances of the applicable jurisdictions. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

Mitigation Measure

Mitigation Measure 15*: Subsequent projects under the RTP shall be designed and implemented to reduce adverse construction noise and vibration impacts to sensitive receptors, as feasible. Measures to reduce noise and vibration effects may include, but are not limited to:*

- *Limit noise-generating construction activities, excluding those that would result in a safety concern to workers or the public, to the least noise-sensitive daytime hours, which is generally 6am to 9pm.*

- *Construction of temporary sound barriers to shield noise-sensitive land uses.*

- *Location of noise-generating stationary equipment (e.g., power generators, compressors, etc.) at the furthest practical distance from nearby noise-sensitive land uses.*

- *Phase demolition, earth-moving and ground-impacting operations so as not to occur in the same time period.*

- *Use of equipment noise-reduction devices (e.g., mufflers, intake silencers, and engine shrouds) in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.*

- *Substituting noise/vibration-generating equipment with equipment or procedures that would generate lower levels of noise/vibration. For instance, in comparison to impact piles, drilled piles or the use of a sonic or vibratory pile driver are preferred alternatives where geological conditions would permit their use.*

- *Other specific measures as they are deemed appropriate by the implementing agency to maintain consistency with adopted policies and regulations regarding noise.*

- *Comply with all local noise control and noise rules, regulations, and ordinances.*

Response c): Some of the RTP projects are located within close proximity to airports within the County. These improvements are transportation related and do not create residences, or other habitable structures within proximity to the airport, and they do not conflict with the airport land use plans within Plumas County. The proposed project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels. This is a ***less than significant*** impact.

XIV. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*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)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Response a): Given the historical and current population, housing, and employment trends, growth in the region is inevitable; however, the rate of growth is considered low compared to the larger metropolitan areas of the Central Valley (i.e. Stockton and Sacramento). Two principal factors that account for population growth are natural increase and net migration. The average annual birth rate for California is expected to be 20 births per 1,000 people compared to 10 births per 1,000 people in West Virginia, the state with the lowest projected birth rate. Additionally, California is expected to attract more than one third of the Country's immigrants. Other factors that affect growth include the cost of housing, the location of jobs, the economy, the climate, and also, transportation.

The RTP has been planned to accommodate anticipated levels of growth, including growth associated with the adopted general plan. The RTP does not involve approvals associated with any development projects, and does not provide infrastructure that could facilitate additional development in the region. The RTP does not induce growth beyond the growth that is planned or being planned by local jurisdictions both locally and regionally.

The PCTC does not make land use approvals associated with this growth, nor do they have the authority to make local land use decisions. Implementation of the RTP will have a ***less than significant*** impact on this issue.

Responses b-c): The RTP would not, in and of itself, displace substantial numbers of housing units or people. The majority of RTP projects involve work within or adjacent to existing rights-of-way and would not involve acquisition of land and displacement of substantial numbers of persons or housing. This is true of most highway and street widening projects, and modifications to intersections/interchanges. These transportation projects will generally not require the displacement of any residences or businesses since the right-of-way has already been acquired.

Some of the RTP projects may involve land acquisition. While most of the additional right-of-way acquisition is anticipated to be vacant or undeveloped land, at a few isolated locations the land necessary for the improvement may include existing residential units or businesses. This is anticipated to be rare and involve a limited number of residences or businesses.

State and federal law require due compensation for property taken to carry out the infrastructure projects. Also required by law, relocation and assistance must be provided to displaced residents and businesses in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and the State of California Relocation Assistance Act.

As noted above, RTP projects would not result in displacement or relocation of a substantial number of homes, businesses, or people. Growth planned in the general plans would result in additional housing opportunities and would more than offset any units removed in association with RTP projects. Therefore, impacts related to a substantial displacement of housing units or persons as a result of the RTP are ***less than significant***.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	Potentially Significant Impact	***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation***	***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:				
Fire protection?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?			X	
Parks?			X	
Other public facilities?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a), b), c), d), e): The improvements identified in the RTP include a variety of transportation improvements that will not result in an increased need for any public services or facilities. The proposed project would not result in an increased demand, or require the need for expansion of the existing recreational facilities beyond what is planned in the General Plan. Implementation of the proposed project will have a ***less than significant impact*** on public services.

XVI. RECREATION

	Potentially Significant Impact	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*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	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a-b): The improvements identified in the RTP include a variety of transportation improvements that will not result in an increased demand, or require the need for expansion of the existing recreational facilities. Furthermore, the improved roadway infrastructure will not require a need for new recreational facilities. Implementation of the proposed project will have a ***less than significant impact*** on recreational facilities.

XVII. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?			X	
b) Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?			X	
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a-b): Implementation of the RTP would support a number of transportation projects throughout the County, including roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian. Some of the projects involve transportation operations, while others involve safety enhancements or maintenance. The long-term operation of these facilities is anticipated to have beneficial impacts and are considered to be consistent with local plans, policies, and ordinances.

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in population growth within Plumas County, and would not directly result in decreases in LOS or increases in VMT on area roadways. The proposed project would improve traffic flows and operations throughout the County, and would not result in a conflict with transportation plans, policies, or ordinances. Implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact relative to this issue.

Responses b): Reducing vehicle miles traveled has become one of the top priorities for Local and State agencies involved in transportation, in alignment with State and Federal legislation setting goals for greenhouse gas reductions. The daily vehicle mileage for Plumas County has increased slightly between 2012 and 2017 (approximately 1.23%). Although there appears to be a large decrease in the VMT on State Park Service roadways and a large increase on U.S. Forest Service roadways, the total lane mileage maintained by these agencies has not been consistent for this time period. A slight increase in VMT on City of Portola roadways and on State highways occurred between 2012 and 2017.

It is expected that VMT will increase minimally on Plumas County roadways over the lifetime of the proposed project due to little or no population growth projected over the coming decades. VMT in Plumas County will increase at an estimated rate no greater than 1.0% annually between 2020 and 2040. Total VMT in 2040 is anticipated to be 1084 vehicle miles traveled per day.

Section 15064.3 of the CEQA Guidelines states that "*Transportation projects that reduce, or have no impact on, vehicle miles traveled should be presumed to cause a less than significant transportation impact...*" Given that VMT increases over the next 20 years are very low, and the individual improvements programed under the RTP are not anticipated to have an impact on

VMT, implementation of the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact relative to topic.

Responses c): The RTP includes roadway projects designed to alleviate existing and anticipated future congestion issues and to reduce traffic hazards. While the RTP includes numerous projects that will involve a design/engineering process, the project-specific designs and plans for these improvements are not available for analysis at this time. However, consistent with agency practice, all improvements will be designed to the standards and specifications of Caltrans or the appropriate implementing agency. As such, the proposed project is not anticipated to cause a substantial increase in hazards due to design features or incompatible uses. Therefore, the potential impacts on safety and compatibility are considered ***less than significant***.

Responses d): The RTP does not propose any specific projects that are believed to result in inadequate emergency access. In some cases, the RTP would provide increased regional connectivity and should improve movement of emergency vehicles. However, emergency access could potentially be affected during construction activities associated with implementation of the various improvement projects identified in the RTP. The County would prepare a traffic control plan for construction and coordinate with emergency service providers to ensure that emergency routes are identified and remain available during construction activities. It will be especially important that each individual roadway construction project be considered relative to the fire season and that it be designed to ensure that there is adequate roadway capacity for emergency evacuation in the event of a wildlife during the construction effort. Implementation of proposed project is a long range planning document that will have a ***less-than-significant*** impact.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) 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:				
i) 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)?		X		
ii) 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 resources to a California Native American tribe.		X		

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses ai-ii):

In adherence with Assembly Bill 52 (AB 52), local Tribal entities were contacted pursuant to Public Resource Code § 21080.3.1 (hereafter PRC) regarding the development of the RTP. PRC requires that lead agencies of projects consult with California Native American Tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project, if the tribe has requested notice from agencies of proposed projects in the geographic area.

Representatives from the Estom Yumeka Maidu Tribe of the Enterprise Rancheria, Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians, Honey Lake Maidu, KonKow Valley Band of Maidu, Mechoopda Indian Tribe, 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 were contacted by letter October 30, 2019. Outreach to the Tribal entities included instructions on where the Tribes can review the draft Regional Transportation Plan and to return any comments within 30 days of receiving the outreach letter. No Tribal comments were received through the AB52 outreach process.

Implementation of most of the RTP improvements would be constructed within the existing rights-of-way. Improvements and modifications within existing rights-of-way would have less potential to encounter previously unknown tribal resources relative to projects in undisturbed areas since the former right-of-way areas have already been disturbed. Improvements and modifications within existing rights-of-way still have potential to adversely affect tribal resources, either directly or indirectly.

Based upon the general planning nature of the RTP, development of detailed, site-specific information on this impact at this planning level is not feasible. As RTP projects are designed and reviewed by local jurisdictions, the RTP projects will undergo technical analysis to evaluate any potential impacts to tribal resources within their area of potential effect. This will include

consultation with the Native American Heritage Commission to determine whether known sacred sites are in the project area. If recommended, a qualified archaeologist will be consulted to conduct archaeological surveys. In some cases, tribal leaders may also conduct surveys of a site. The significance of any resources that are determined to be in the project area will be assessed according to the applicable local, state, and federal significance criteria.

Implementation of several mitigation measures presented under the cultural resources section of this Initial Study would ensure that all subsequent RTP projects either avoid known tribal resources, or take steps to implement amelioration methods to reduce impacts to known resources. It would also require investigations and avoidance methods in the event that a previously undiscovered resource is encountered during construction activities. This mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation*	*Less Than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?			X	
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?			X	
c) 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	
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?			X	
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a-b), d-g): The County has an elaborate network of public utilities and services, such as water, wastewater, and solid waste collection and disposal. It has been a goal of the County to maintain an adequate level of services for all public utilities and services provided to the community. Utility infrastructure exists in various parts of the county. The proposed project does not require the use of these utilities or infrastructure and would not result in the expansion of utilities or infrastructure. Implementation of the proposed project will have a ***less than significant*** impact.

Response c): Each individual improvement project would result in additional impervious services and increased stormwater runoff. County policies and federal and state laws provide various requirements relative to storm drainage management. These include the preparation of a drainage study for each individual improvement. The results of the drainage study would then allow for proper engineering and construction of storm drainage infrastructure (i.e. culverts, pipes, detention/retention ponds, biofilters, etc.) to control runoff and prevent flooding, erosion, and sedimentation. Each improvement would require a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan that would be submitted to the Regional Water Quality Control Board for review and approval prior to issuance of a General Permit for storm water discharge. The RTP does not provide detailed engineering and drainage plans for any of the potential improvements because they will be completed at a project specific level at a later date once they are funded and up for approval. The RTP would have a ***less than significant*** impact on storm drainage.

XX. WILDFIRE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation	Less Than Significant Impact	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?			X	
d) 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 downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?			X	

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a), b), c), d): The proposed project is a regional planning effort developed by the PCTC that covers all of Plumas County. The planning area includes "Very High" Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), as determined by CAL FIRE. The individual improvements projects would not result in new structures in these areas, but would improve connectivity within the planning area, thereby allowing improved management or wildfires within the planning area. Therefore, the proposed project would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, exacerbate wildfire risks, or expose people or structures to significant wildfire risks.

Nevertheless, there exists the possibility that proposed project could require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure associated with the proposed project that could exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. Therefore, the potential for individual projects to exacerbate fire risk or result in temporary or ongoing environmental impacts due to the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure will need to be analyzed on a project by project level.

Project site specific design is not currently available for RTP improvement projects; therefore, the location of associated infrastructure is yet to be determined. Therefore, installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure would be evaluated on a project by project basis as part of the CEQA process prior to project approval. Since site specific design details are not currently available, each agency will need to do a project specific review by the implementing agency prior to project approval. Implementation of a project-level review would reduce this potentially significant impact to a ***less than significant*** level.

XXI. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

	Potentially Significant Impact	***Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation***	***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		

Responses to Checklist Questions

Responses a-c): As described throughout the analysis above, the proposed project will not result in any changes to General Plan land use designations or zoning districts, would not result in annexation of land, and would not allow development in areas that are not already planned for development in the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures 1-4, the project would not threaten a significant biological resource, nor would it eliminate important examples California history or prehistory. With the implementation of Mitigation Measure 5-13, the project would not cause hydrology and water quality impacts, which would ensure that fish and other aquatic wildlife are not threatened. The proposed project does not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable. With the implementation of Mitigation Measures 14-15, the project would not have substantial adverse noise impacts on human beings. There are no other environmental topics with the potential to have an adverse environmental impact. With the implementation of the mitigation measures presented above; the proposed project would have a ***less than significant*** impact on these environmental topics.

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