



Inyo County Regional Transportation Plan 2023-2043

Initial Study and Negative Declaration

Prepared for the



Inyo County Local Transportation
Commission



Prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.

Initial Study
and
Negative Declaration

For the Inyo County 2023 Regional Transportation Plan

Prepared for

Inyo County Local Transportation Commission
168 N. Edwards Street
Independence, CA 93526

Prepared by

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November 21, 2023

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PROJECT TITLE: Inyo County 2023 Regional Transportation Plan

LEAD AGENCY: Inyo County Local Transportation Commission
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PROJECT LOCATION: Inyo County

Inyo County is located in eastern California approximately midway between the state’s northern and southern borders (Figure 1). The western border of the County is the crest of the Sierra Nevada while the eastern boundary is the Nevada State line, the northern boundary is the Mono County line and the southern boundary is shared with Kern and San Bernardino Counties. The only incorporated city is Bishop. Other towns discussed in the plan include Big Pine, Independence, Lone Pine, Olancho, Shoshone, Tecopa, and areas close to each of these communities.

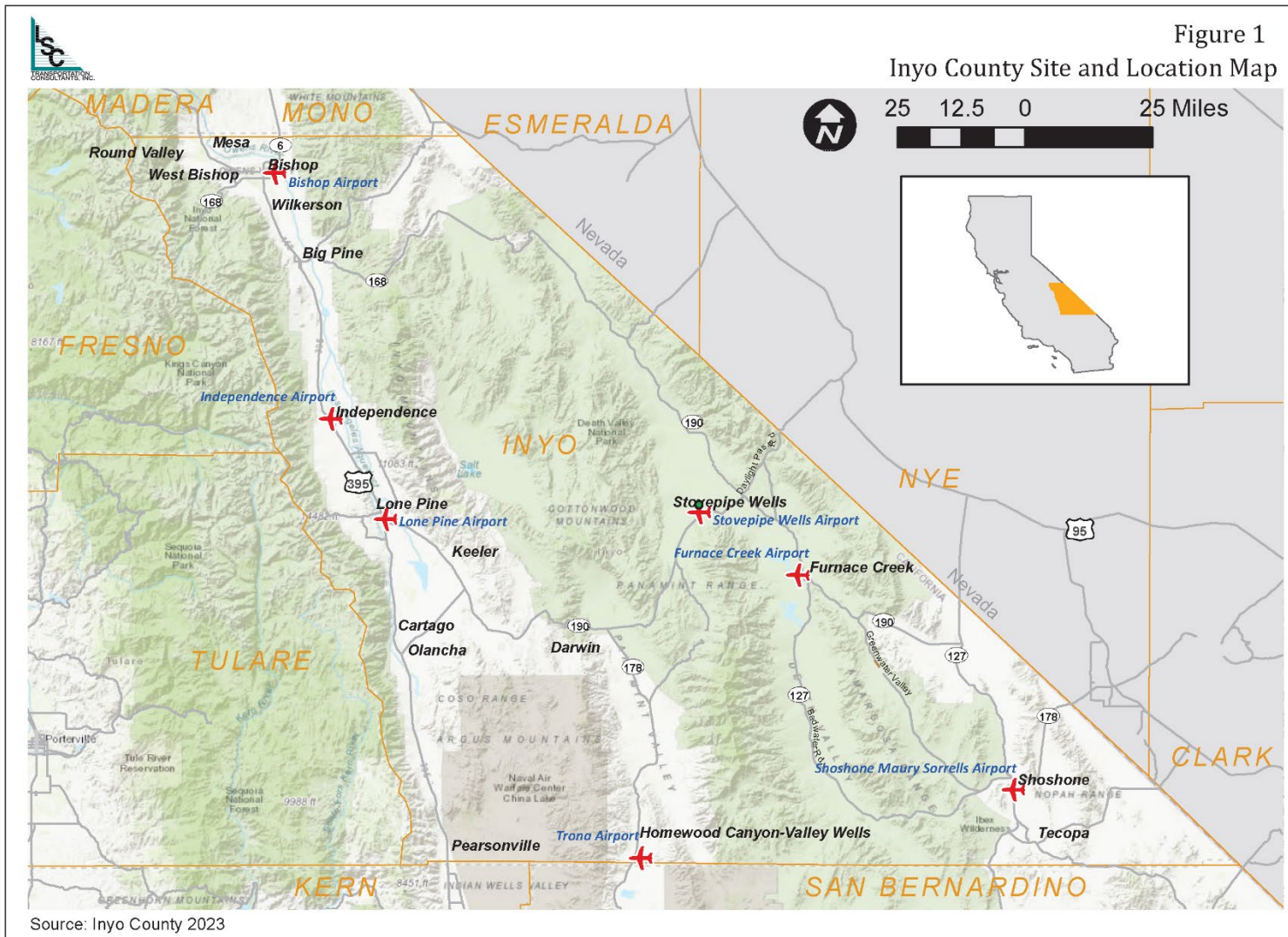
PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Inyo County Local Transportation Commission (ICLTC) has recently prepared an updated draft Inyo County 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (which is defined as the “Project” for purposes of this study). ICLTC staff worked with a consulting firm to guide the development of the Project. A public hearing will be held during an ICLTC meeting to solicit public input. The Public Draft RTP can be viewed and downloaded from the ICLTC page: <https://www.inyocounty.us/services/public-works/inyo-county-local-transportation-commission>

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

The Initial Study evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the goals, policies, and implementation measures of the RTP and the construction, use and maintenance of transportation facilities identified in the plan. This Initial Study has been prepared at a program level to enable broad consideration of the RTP’s program-level impacts and reduce repetitive analysis issues that may be relevant to multiple projects.

Program-level consideration of the RTP provides the County and City of Bishop an opportunity to propose countywide and/or citywide programmatic mitigation that might not be possible with individual project-level analysis. Based upon the findings of this Initial Study, and pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, the ICLTC plans to prepare a Negative Declaration. If, through the public review process,



mitigation measures are found necessary, the ICLTC will prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration that includes a mitigation monitoring program in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is defined as a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which identifies improvements to enhance or augment regional transportation in Inyo County. The RTP does not directly provide for the implementation of transportation projects and/or facilities. Rather, it identifies necessary improvements to provide the best possible circulation/transportation system to meet the mobility and access needs of the entire county.

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

Due to the regional nature of the RTP, this analysis focuses on those impacts that are anticipated to be potentially significant on a regional system-wide level. As individual projects near implementation, it will be necessary to undertake “project-specific” environmental assessments before each project is approved and implemented. Such review will be required in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and, if federally funded, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If necessary, mitigation measures to offset potential adverse environmental impacts resulting from those projects will be implemented. Since CEQA does not require speculation, and since some of the projects identified in the RTP are subject to delay or change in priority, it is not necessary and would be premature to analyze the environmental impacts that individual projects may generate at this stage of the RTP. This RTP is also consistent with the goals and policies of the Inyo County General Plan and the City of Bishop General Plan.

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

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

The RTP presents a series of goals focusing on mobility, safety, quality of life, environmental impacts, and financial effectiveness. In the document, capital transportation improvement projects are identified that

meet regional transportation needs and are consistent with regional goals and adopted planning documents. Projects identified in the RTP consist of the following:

- Short-term, mid-term, and long-term roadway/bridge projects including roadway maintenance and bridge rehabilitation/reconstruction on state highways, county roads, and city streets.
- Caltrans projects consisting of culvert and guardrail replacement.
- Federal lands access roadway rehabilitation/reconstruction.
- Active transportation improvement projects, including construction of sidewalks, bike paths, and pedestrian ways to increase safety for non-motorized transportation users.
- Transit capital improvement projects.
- Aviation capital improvement projects.

Funding is expected to be generated through a wide range of existing state, federal, and local sources. A wide variety of natural resource agencies, public transportation providers, government agencies, tribal entities, representatives of disadvantaged groups, the private sector, and the general public were contacted as part of the RTP process.

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND SETTING

According to the 2020 US Census, Inyo County has a total population of 19,016. This is a 2.5 percent increase from the 2010 Census recorded population for Inyo County and 6.3 percent greater than the 1980 census (Figure 2). Of the 2020 total, 3,819 people lived in the City of Bishop. According to this data, the predominant ethnicity is White (61.8 percent), followed by Hispanic (23.1 percent), and American Indian (13 percent). According to the 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, roughly 3.3 percent of the County spoke English less than “very well”.

According to California Department of Finance projections, the percentage of the total Inyo County population aged 65 and older is projected to increase significantly from 29.8 percent in 2025 to 34.7 percent in 2045.

Roughly 98 percent of the land in Inyo County is held by public agencies such as the US Forest Service, National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station, the State of California, and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Limited by public lands and geography, the developed areas of Inyo County consist largely of small communities along the US 395 corridor. Tourism and recreation is the major industry in the region, with approximately 3 million people visiting the Eastern Sierra annually.

OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

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

CONSULTATION WITH CALIFORNIA NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES

Pursuant to PUC 21080.3.1 and AB 52, ICLTC consulted with Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with Inyo County. ICLTC requested a consultation list of tribes located within Inyo

County from the Native American Heritage Commission. At the beginning of the project, in December 2022, ICLTC sent letters to each tribe requesting input on regional transportation needs as well to begin formal consultation. Tribes were also personally invited to the public hearing on the RTP and provided with a copy of the Draft RTP. To date, no tribes have responded.

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.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture / Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Air Quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Geology/Soils | <input type="checkbox"/> Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazards and Hazardous Materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Use / Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Population / Housing | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities / Service Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance |

DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

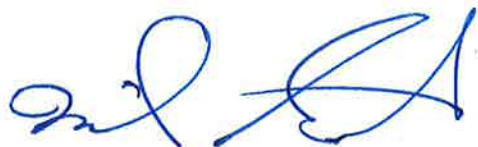
X I find that the proposed project **COULD NOT** have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **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

9/7/23

Date

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST AND ANALYSIS

CHECKLIST AND ANALYSIS

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

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

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

I. AESTHETICS Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099, would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) In nonurbanized 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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: There is an abundance of scenic resources in Inyo County. Those RTP projects proposed on mountain roads are for safety and/or system preservation and will not result in significant visual changes to existing facilities. Less than significant impacts are identified at the plan level as all aesthetic resource impacts will be identified and mitigated on a project-specific basis.

II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: No farmland in Inyo County is currently part of a Williamson Act contract. The Inyo County General Plan Land Use Element includes an “Agriculture” designation and irrigated agriculture is an important part of the rural nature of the County. The RTP in general emphasizes system preservation and safety concerns. This is a less than significant impact.

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

Discussion: Inyo County is part of the Great Basin Valley Air Basin, with air quality managed by the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District. Inyo County is considered “in attainment” or unclassified for every federal air quality standard. As for state standards, Inyo County is not in attainment for Ozone and PM-10. Local data collected by the GBUAPC indicates that PM 10 and PM 2.5 levels are “good” in Inyo County. Many RTP projects will rehabilitate the current road base, improve existing and future circulation, support zero-emission vehicles, and increase the use of active transportation. With this focus, improvements in the RTP may benefit regional air quality. Dust and emissions from construction

equipment for RTP projects could cause PM10 emissions during roadway construction activities. Each project will undergo air quality analysis as part of the implementation phase. The construction phase of each project will need to comply with the requirements of the Inyo County Public Works Department and the Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control Department.

IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: All roadway improvements in the plan located within Inyo County are located on existing facilities and will not have a significant impact on biological resources. Furthermore, any improvement projects will consider means through which to increase wildlife connectivity or improve habitat health, where appropriate, in accordance with Senate Bill 790 (2021).

The RTP contains policies to minimize the environmental impacts of transportation investments. Natural resource agencies were included in the early planning process and continued review of state and federal environmental resource planning documents and regulations is encouraged. ICLTC also supports interagency actions to identify and mitigate barriers to wildlife movement, created by the development of transportation infrastructure, in accordance with Assembly Bill 2344 (2022).

Given the assurance of project-specific environmental review and compliance with existing regulations, the impact of this RTP is deemed less than significant.

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

Discussion: RTP projects on existing facilities will not have a significant impact on cultural resources. RTP projects that will expand existing rights-of-way into undisturbed areas or construct new rights-of-way into undisturbed areas have the potential to have a significant impact on cultural resources. However, a project-specific environmental review will reduce any such impact to a less-than-significant status.

If any human remains are discovered during archaeological investigations or construction, the County Coroner shall be contacted and steps taken to comply with Section 9.52 of Inyo County Code and appropriate state statutes regarding the disposition of human remains.

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

b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Discussion: The RTP will not result in wasteful or unnecessary consumption of energy during project construction or operation or conflict with a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

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

Discussion: The RTP identifies projects for reconstruction of and improvements to existing roadways and bridges, specific impacts on geology and soils associated with these projects will be addressed and mitigated as necessary on an individual basis at the time of project review.

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

Discussion: The RTP includes goals, policies, and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Inyo County. RTP projects such as roadway and bridge repairs are necessary to maintain a safe regional

transportation system and to prevent deterioration of roadways and bridges which may require costlier repairs in the future. The RTP supports the increase of zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) use within the County, which will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, particularly through the conversion of the public transit fleet from diesel to ZEV. The RTP also includes long-term bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects which will create more bicycle and pedestrian-friendly communities and potentially reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The RTP also includes capital improvement projects for the public transit operator in Inyo County. By expanding alternative forms of transportation, Inyo County is in line with statewide climate change goals. Combined, successful implementation of the above efforts will reduce, not increase, greenhouse gas emissions in Inyo County.

The improvements to roadway facilities proposed in the RTP will reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve connectivity. The RTP is a programmatic document and does not negate the requirement for project-specific environmental review. Therefore, there is no potential for significant impact.

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

f) f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: RTP projects will not increase hazards and hazardous materials. RTP projects are transportation improvement projects including the installation of guardrails and traffic control signs which will increase the safety of Inyo County roadways. The RTP is a programmatic document. Specific environmental impacts of proposed projects discussed in the RTP will be addressed and mitigated on an individual basis at the time of project review.

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

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: In general, this RTP identifies the need for replacement, rehabilitation, and upkeep of roadways and bridges. The construction of new transportation facilities can increase the intensity of stormwater drainage. New facilities are required to comply with Inyo County or City of Bishop Public Works Department requirements, and, if necessary, to obtain a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Permit from the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. Again, at the project level, further environmental review will be required to address and reduce this potential impact in accordance with existing regulatory requirements.

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

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

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

Discussion: The RTP includes improvements to transportation systems such as roadways, bridges, airports, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities. RTP project will not affect mineral resources.

XIII. NOISE				
Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The most probable source of noise impacts would come from construction activities associated with proposed projects in this RTP. The Noise portion of the Public Safety Element of the Inyo County Goals and Policies Report establishes Day-night Average Sound Levels (Ldn) that new projects need to comply with. The maximum allowable ambient noise exposure is divided by land use. Noise sensitive land uses (receptors) include residential areas, hospitals, convalescent homes and extended care facilities, schools, libraries, day-care centers, and other similar land uses as determined by the County. General Plan Policy NOI-1.4 regarding Transportation-Related Noise is relevant in the consideration of new transportation projects.

The RTP concentrates on system preservation and safety for County roadways. Future projects are subject to project-specific environmental review and analysis. Given the existing General Plan policies, any potential impact will be less than significant.

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

Discussion: The RTP is a programmatic document. Project-specific environmental review will follow with every project proposed in the RTP. The primary focus of the RTP is the safety and maintenance of existing facilities. Therefore, the RTP will not have an impact on population and housing. Additionally, the population of Inyo County has been declining in recent years.

XV. PUBLIC SERVICES				
Would the project:	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) 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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
a) Fire protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b) Police protection?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
c) Schools?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d) Parks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
f) Other public facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: As RTP projects focus on the improvement of existing roadway facilities and other transportation facilities, not housing, there will be no impact on public services. Any impact would be beneficial, in that improvements to existing facilities would aid in access to public services.

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

Discussion: Adoption and implementation of the RTP will not create the need for new or expanded park and recreation facilities. The project will improve recreation opportunities by upgrading and rehabilitating bike trails and trailhead facilities for hiker and biker use. The underlying goal of these projects is to increase connectivity and reduce reliance on the private automobile. The impacts of the construction of those trails will be addressed on an individual basis at the time of project review.

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

Discussion: All projects identified in the RTP are determined to improve the overall transportation system and related impacts. RTP projects will not likely increase vehicle miles traveled in Inyo County as no new

trip generators are being constructed. The RTP includes a long list of potential active transportation projects that will have the potential to reduce vehicle miles traveled. With an emphasis on climate resiliency, the RTP includes projects that will improve emergency access. Furthermore, as the RTP is a programmatic document, and as the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, there is no potential for significant impact.

XVIII. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code § 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:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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), or	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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 § 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code § 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The RTP goals, policies, and objectives acknowledge the importance of coordination and consultation with tribal governments located within the boundary of Inyo County. Those Tribal Governments that have sacred lands within Inyo County were contacted and their input was requested in the RTP process. Copies of this Initial Study and the Draft RTP document have been sent to tribal representatives. ICLTC will seek tribal input on any proposed new transportation improvement projects that have the potential to impact tribal cultural resources and identified impacts will be mitigated to be less than significant.

XIX. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
Would the project:				

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

Discussion: As the RTP projects focus primarily on the improvement of existing roadway facilities, the potential for significant impacts on utilities and service systems is low. Some of the new routes or route improvements contemplated in the RTP could have direct impacts on utilities or service systems, especially during project construction on a project-specific basis. The statewide transition to ZEVs and ICLTC's support of this transition may impact utility systems within the County and any environmental impacts of ZEV infrastructure projects will be evaluated on a project-specific level.

All road improvement projects will undergo environmental impact analysis in accordance with CEQA (or NEPA, if appropriate). No impacts are identified at the plan level as all potentially affected water resources and/or utility interests will be identified and mitigated on a project-specific basis.

XX. WILDFIRE	Potentially Significant	Less than Significant with Mitigation	Less than Significant	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discussion: The RTP aims to support wildfire risk mitigation improvements through maintaining and improving roadways. All impacts to emergency evacuation during construction will be evaluated at the project level and will be mitigated to less than significant.

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

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

The forecast growth in Inyo County is negative over the next 20 years and will result in minimal impacts on current facilities. The RTP will benefit regional transportation and circulation as it provides a policy framework to reduce or eliminate vehicle trips and safety hazards for automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and air traffic conflicts. Some financially unconstrained projects in the Bishop area propose roadway extensions of dead-end roads to provide better connectivity of local roadways. All other capacity road projects are Caltrans MOU projects on State facilities that have already been programmed. These have undergone an extensive environmental review and analysis before implementation and construction so that any impacts will be mitigated to “less than significant.” The RTP addresses connectivity and safety of the transportation system. Implementation of the Plan should result in a decrease in automobile conflicts and improved safety for both drivers and bicycle travel. Implementation will reduce VMTs and greenhouse gas emissions. As such, this impact is considered to be less than significant.

PREPARERS

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