Chapter 1
INTRODUCTION

PROJECT TITLE: Lassen County 2023 Regional Transportation Plan

LEAD AGENCY: Lassen County Transportation Commission
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PROJECT LOCATION: Lassen County

Lassen County, California is located on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada mountains in northeastern California approximately 90 miles northwest of Reno, Nevada, and approximately 200 miles northeast of Sacramento, California. Lassen County is bound by Modoc County to the north, Shasta County to the west, Plumas and Sierra Counties to the south, and Washoe County (State of Nevada) to the east (see Figure 1). The County contains one incorporated city (Susanville) and one federally recognized tribal entity (Susanville Indian Rancheria).

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Lassen County Transportation Commission (LCTC) has recently prepared an updated draft Lassen County 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) (which is defined as the "Project" for purposes of this study). LCTC staff worked with local jurisdictions and Caltrans to complete this project. A public hearing will be held during an LCTC meeting to solicit public input. The Public Draft RTP can be viewed and downloaded from the LCTC page: https://www.lassenctc.com/.

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Lead Agency is required to prepare an Initial Study for the Project. The LCTC is defined as the Lead Agency under the provisions of CEQA. The primary objective is 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.

Figure 1
Lassen County Site Map

Program-level consideration of the RTP provides the County and City of Susanville 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 LCTC plans to prepare a Negative Declaration. If, through the public review process, mitigation measures are found necessary, the LCTC 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 Lassen 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 LCTC, 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 Lassen County General Plan and the City of Susanville General Plan.

The RTP begins with a background discussion of Lassen 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 LCTC 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 LCTC.

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 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 safety improvements, pavement rehabilitation, and a Roadside Rest Area.
- Bridge 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, Lassen County has a total population of 32,730. This is a 6.2 percent decrease from the 2010 Census recorded population for Lassen County. Of the 2020 total, roughly half lived in the City of Susanville. Lassen County has an inmate and institutionalized population of 8,750. According to this data, the predominant ethnicity is White (60 percent), followed by Hispanic (23 percent), African American (7 percent), and American Indian (3 percent). The median household income for Lassen County is 73 percent of the statewide average.

According to California Department of Finance projections, the total population of Lassen County will decrease by 16.6 percent over the 20-year planning period of the RTP.

The City of Susanville is the most densely populated community within Lassen County. Population density in Susanville (1,687 persons/square mile) is significantly higher than the average for the County (7 persons/square mile). Land use in Susanville City is surrounded by open space, with a large proportion of residential and commercial in the center. A large proportion of land in Lassen County is designated open space or wilderness area and is managed by local, State, and Federal entities. The Sierra Army Depot and the prisons are major employers in the region.

OTHER AGENCY APPROVALS

Per Government Code Section 65080, the RTP must be adopted by LCTC 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, LCTC consulted with Native American Tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with Lassen County. LCTC requested a consultation list of tribes located within Lassen County from the Native American Heritage Commission. In June 2022 and 2023, LCTC sent letters to each tribe requesting input on regional transportation needs as well as 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.

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

DETERMINATION

Based on 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	*Date*

Chapter 2

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion: There is an abundance of scenic resources in Lassen County. Those RTP projects proposed on rural 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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))?	☐	☐	☐	☒

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion: The Lassen 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 transportation system preservation and safety concerns. Projects in the RTP will not require the conversion of agricultural land. 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion: Lassen County air quality is managed by the Lassen County Air Pollution Control District. Air quality levels in Lassen County are "good" for the majority of the year. 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 Lassen County Public Works Department and the Lassen County 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion: Transportation improvements in the plan that are on existing facilities will not have a significant impact on biological resources. Those facilities 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 biological resources. Most of these projects would involve improvements to the bicycle/pedestrian network and are not funded at this time. The RTP contains policies to minimize the environmental impacts of transportation investments. Natural resource agencies were included in the early planning process. Project-specific environmental review and existing regulations will mitigate potential impacts to a less-than-significant status.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to § 15064.5?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries?	☐	☐	☒	☐

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 during construction, the County Coroner shall be contacted and steps taken to comply with the Lassen 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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:	☐	☐	☐	☒
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.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Landslides?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion: The RTP includes goals, policies, and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Lassen 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. 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 travelled (VMT). The RTP also includes public transit elements. By expanding alternative forms of transportation, Lassen County is in line with statewide climate change goals. The RTP is a programmatic document and the proposed projects will be reviewed on a project-by-project basis, therefore there is no potential for significant impact.

IX. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS Would the project:	**Potentially Significant**	**Less than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less than Significant**	**No Impact**
a) a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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 Lassen 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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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 a substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite	☐	☐	☒	☐
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	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv. impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒

d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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. Any new or expanded facilities (which are only identified over the long-term planning period) will required to comply with Lassen County or City of Susanville Public Works Department requirements, and, if necessary, to obtain a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Permit from the 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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion: The most probable source of noise impacts would come from construction activities associated with proposed projects in this RTP. These projects must comply with local jurisdiction noise ordinances.

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)?	☐	☐	☐	☒

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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 transportation facilities. Any new facilities will be bicycle and pedestrian facilities within established communities. Therefore, the RTP will not have an impact on population and housing. Additionally, the population of Lassen 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:	☐	☐	☐	☒
a) Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐

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 and pedestrian trails and trailhead facilities for hiker and biker use. The underlying goal of these projects is to increase safety, 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 Would the project:	**Potentially Significant**	**Less than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less than Significant**	**No Impact**
a) Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines § 15064.3, subdivision (b)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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 travelled in Lassen 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 travelled. 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:	☐	☐	☒	☐
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	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion: The RTP goals, policies, and objectives acknowledge the importance of coordination and consultation with tribal governments located within the boundary of Lassen County. Those Tribal Governments that have sacred lands within Lassen 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. LCTC 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 Would the project:	**Potentially Significant**	**Less than Significant with Mitigation**	**Less than Significant**	**No Impact**
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐

b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?	☐	☐	☐	☒
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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. Any RTP projects that expand transportation facilities include passing lanes or new bike/ped paths and it is unlikely these projects would have an impact on utilities. RTP projects could have direct impacts on utilities or service systems, during project construction on a project-specific basis. The statewide transition to ZEVs and LCTC'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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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?				
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?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Discussion: The RTP aims to support wildfire risk mitigation improvements by maintaining and improving roadways that are needed for emergency evacuation. RTP projects will not increase the risk of flooding or landslides.

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?	☐	☐	☒	☐
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.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Discussion: Preparation and adoption of the RTP represents long-term transportation planning for the Lassen 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 population growth in Lassen County is negative over the next 20 years and will result in minimal impacts to current facilities. The RTP will benefit regional transportation and circulation as it

provides a policy framework to reduce or eliminate vehicle trips and safety hazards for automobiles, bicyclists, and pedestrians, and aviation. Some financially unconstrained projects propose passing lanes or new bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Otherwise almost all funded projects represent rehabilitation of existing roadways as needed to maintain a safe and efficient regional transportation system. As each project is brought forth for implementation it will undergo environmental review. 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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