

# ALPINE COUNTY DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/ ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST



September 2015

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ALPINE COUNTY DRAFT INITIAL STUDY/  
ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST  
2015 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Report Prepared for:

ALPINE COUNTY LOCAL  
TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

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# Initial Study Checklist

## Project Title

Alpine County 2015 Regional Transportation Plan

## Lead Agency Name and Address

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Markleeville, California 96120  
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## Contact Person and Phone Number

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## Project Sponsor's Name and Address

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## Project Location and Setting

Alpine County is located in the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Eastern California, just south of the Lake Tahoe Area (Figure 1). There are no incorporated cities in Alpine County. Markleeville, Woodfords, Kirkwood, and Bear Valley are the primary unincorporated communities in the study area. The tribal community of Hung-a-Lel-Ti is located near Woodfords.

Alpine County comprises 465,030 acres (738.6 square miles), which makes it California's eighth smallest of 58 counties. The area is truly a recreation paradise, from the tall mountain peaks laced with lakes and streams to the valley floors. Almost 95 percent of the land is publicly owned and is open to the public for such uses as skiing, fishing, hiking, hunting, whitewater rafting, mountain biking, and other daytime recreational uses. The study area includes portions of the Mokelumne and Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Areas, and portions of the Humboldt-Toiyabe, Stanislaus, and El Dorado National Forests. Alpine County also boasts other developed amenities, such Grover Hot Springs State Park, Bear Valley Ski Resort, and Kirkwood Ski Resort. Elevation ranges from 4,800 feet to over 11,400 feet. The Central Sierra Nevada is the dominant land feature, with Carson and Antelope Valleys bordering on the east.

The automobile is the prevalent mode of travel within the County. The County is served by one general aviation airport, located three miles east of SR 89 on Airport Road between Markleeville and Woodfords (see Figure 1). The airport has no facilities such as hangars and fuel services. Travel in Alpine is primarily automobile-oriented due to the rural nature of the local communities, low development densities, and limited options for using non-auto modes of travel.

The maintained roadway system in Alpine County totals approximately 287.33 centerline miles. In addition to private roadways, the public road system consists of 82.71 miles in the state highway

system, 134.96 miles in the county roadway system, 64.64 miles in the jurisdiction of the US Forest Service, 3.95 miles in the State Park service and 1.1 miles in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) jurisdiction. The state highways transecting Alpine County are SR 4, SR 88, and SR 89. SR 4 provides a link to Calaveras County to the southwest over Ebbett's Pass. SR 88 provides links to the Central Valley to the west, and Minden and Gardnerville to the east in Nevada's Carson Valley. SR 89 provides links to South Lake Tahoe (El Dorado County) to the north and Mono County to the southeast over Monitor Pass. Ebbetts Pass and Monitor Pass are closed during the winter months due to snow accumulation. Additionally SR 207, Mt. Reba Road, connects the Bear Valley Ski Resort to SR 4. State highways play an important role in Alpine County's transportation system serving as main streets for most of the communities in the county. Annual vehicle miles traveled on state highways in Alpine County is estimated to be 47 million miles (Caltrans 2008).

Recent California Department of Finance (DOF) figures indicated that Alpine County's 2010 population was 1,175. In January 2015, the population was estimated at 1,121, which calculates to approximately -0.48 percent change per year on average. Countywide population density in 2015 was estimated to equal 1.5 persons per square mile. While the population of Alpine County has been declining in recent years, the DOF population forecast reports an overall population increase for the next 20 years. Alpine County population is expected to increase approximately 10.3 percent between 2010 and 2020 and peak in 2025 before decreasing through the RTP horizon year, 2035

## GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING

### ALPINE COUNTY GENERAL PLAN

There are a variety of General Plan Land Use designations applicable throughout the entire County, which includes the entire project area. The proposed project was designed to be consistent with the General Plans of Alpine County. The Circulation Element from the County's general plan was used as a reference during the development of the Alpine County 2015 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The proposed project is consistent with the general plan and does not include any proposed changes to the County's general plan.

### ALPINE COUNTY ZONING CODE

There are a variety of zoning designations applicable throughout the entire County, which includes the entire project area. The proposed project was designed to be consistent with the zoning code of Alpine County.

## Project Description

The Alpine County Local Transportation Commission (ACLTC) is the designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Alpine County. The ACLTC and Caltrans (District 10) mutually carry out the transportation planning process for Alpine County. One of the main responsibilities of the ACLTC is the preparation and approval of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP serves as the planning blueprint to guide transportation investments in Alpine County involving local, state, and federal funding over the next twenty years. The horizon year for the 2015 Alpine County RTP is 2035. Transportation improvements in the RTP are identified as short-term (0-10 years) or long-term (11-20 years).

The overall focus of the 2015 RTP is directed at developing a coordinated and balanced multi-modal regional transportation system that is financially constrained to the revenues anticipated over the life of the plan. The coordination focus brings the County, Caltrans, governmental resource agencies, commercial and agricultural interests, Hung-a-Lel-Ti Tribal community, and citizens into the planning process. The balance is achieved by considering investment and improvements for moving people

and goods across all modes including roads, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, trucking, railroad, and aviation. The previous RTP was adopted by the ACLTC in 2010.

#### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

As defined by the 2010 RTP Guidelines, the purpose of the regional transportation plan is to accomplish the following objectives:

- Provide an assessment of the current modes of transportation and the potential of new travel options within the region.
- Identify projected growth corridors and predict the future improvements and needs for travel and goods movement.
- Identify and document specific actions necessary to address the region’s mobility and accessibility needs, and establish short-term and long-term goals to facilitate these actions.
- Provide information for the RTIP, the ITIP, and the FTIP.
- Help facilitate the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA)/404 integration process.
- Identify and integrate public policy decisions made by local, regional, State, and Federal officials regarding transportation expenditures and financing.
- Promote consistency between the CTP, the RTP, and other plans developed by cities, counties, districts, Tribal Governments, and State and Federal agencies in response to Statewide and interregional transportation needs and issues.
- Employ performance measures that demonstrate the effectiveness of the transportation improvement projects in meeting the intended goals.
- Provide a forum for participation and cooperation, and facilitate partnerships that reconcile transportation issues which transcend regional boundaries.
- Include Federal, State and local agencies, Tribal governments, the public, and elected officials in discussions and decision-making early in the transportation planning process.
- Estimate the impact of the transportation system on air quality within the region and model its impacts on GHG emissions. (only applicable to non-attainment RTPAs and MPOs)
- Include an SCS for the regional forecasted development pattern which will reduce GHG emissions from automobiles and light trucks, with the goal of achieving the target approved for the region by the California Air Resources Board (ARB). (only applicable to non-attainment RTPAs and MPOs)
- Prepare an Alternate Planning Strategy (APS) to enact if the SCS is unable to reach the GHG emissions reduction target set forth by the ARB. (only applicable to non-attainment RTPAs and MPOs)

The ACLTC prepared this 2015 RTP based on these objectives consistent with the 2010 RTP Guidelines (adopted April 7, 2010).

#### **Project Purpose and Need**

The RTP guidelines require that an RTP “provide a clearly defined justification for its transportation projects and programs.” This requirement is often referred to as The Project Purpose and Need Statement. Caltrans’ Deputy Directive No. DD 83 describes a project’s “Need” as an identified transportation deficiency or problem, and its “Purpose” is the set of objectives that will be met to address the transportation deficiency. For Alpine County, each table of projects by mode in Tables 5.2 through 5.8 of the 2015 RTP includes a qualitative assessment of purpose and need indicating a project’s contribution to system preservation, capacity enhancement, safety, and/ or multimodal enhancements. These broader categories capture the intended outcome for projects during the life

of the RTP and serve to enhance and protect the “livability” of residents in the County. The following definitions are used in the RTP document.

**System Preservation** – This category of improvement indicates a project that serves to maintain the integrity of the existing system so that access and mobility are not hindered for travelers. Improvements may include bridge repairs, upgrading of existing rail lines, airport runway repairs, and upgrades to signs and traffic control devices and stripping. In addition, because Alpine County is very rural and contains several small communities, the lack of maintenance funding has resulted in a large amount of “deferred maintenance” that has actually lapsed into a serious need to “rehabilitate” roadways to maintain system preservation. Rehabilitation entails primarily overlay and/or chip seal work that can also be considered a safety improvement. The majority of road projects listed indicate either “rehabilitation” or “reconstruction” to maintain system preservation.

**Capacity Enhancement** – A capacity enhancement indicates a project that serves to increase traffic flows and to help alleviate congestion and improve LOS. This result may be achieved by adding a lane of traffic, adding a passing lane, and/or adding a turn-out for slow-moving vehicles. Because **Alpine** County experiences large volumes of truck and recreational traffic on many of its roadways, the ability of vehicles to travel at desired speeds is sometimes restricted. Capacity enhancement projects are designed to increase travel speeds and provide for opportunities to pass slower vehicles safely. Additional capacity can also apply to airport projects where runways are added or extended. The desired outcome is to maintain acceptable LOS on State and regionally significant roads, and adequate capacity at the County’s two airports to meet existing and future demand.

**Safety Projects** – Safety improvements are intended to reduce the chance of conflicts between modes, prevent injury to motorists using the transportation system, and to ensure that motorists can travel to their destination in a timely manner. Safety improvements may include roadway and intersection realignments to improve sight-distance, pavement or runway resurfacing to provide for a smooth travel surface, signage to clarify traffic and aviation operations, congestion relief, obstacle removal so that traffic flows are not hindered, and improvements to pedestrian and bicycle facilities to promote safe travel to desired destinations. In addition, bridge repairs and reinforcement serve to improve safety. The desired outcome is to reduce the incident of collisions on County facilities and the societal costs in terms of injury, death or property damage.

**Multi-modal Enhancement** – These type of improvements focus on non-auto modes of travel such as bicycling, walking and transit. Projects that are designated as multimodal are designed to enhance travel by one or more of these modes, provide for better connectivity between modes, and to improve non-auto access to major destinations and activity centers. Typical projects include separated bike lanes, shared bike routes, sidewalks, transit amenities, street furniture, and signage.

All projects listed in the Action Element fall into one of the following tier designations. It should be noted that projects within each tier are for the most part in random order. Consequently, the ACLTC, County, and/or Caltrans may change the priority ranking or project scope during the RTP approval process.

- Tier 1: RTP improvements represent short-range projects that are fully fundable from anticipated revenue sources and will normally be programmed during the first 10 years (0-10 years) of the RTP.
- Tier 2: RTP improvements represent long-range projects that are included on the “unfunded” list of projects in Appendix G of the RTP and are planned for programming in the 11-20 year time frame (by the RTP horizon year, 2035).

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

Due to the regional nature of the RTP, the analysis in this Initial Study focuses on those impacts that are anticipated to be potentially significant on 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 future environmental review will be required in accordance with CEQA and, if federally funded, NEPA. Adoption of this Initial Study/Negative Declaration and approval of the RTP does not authorize Alpine County or Caltrans, to undertake construction of specific improvement projects identified in the RTP without further environmental review and consideration.

#### REGIONAL GOALS

The following RTP goals, policies and objectives have been retained and updated from the 2010 RTP. These goals, policies and implementation measures have been modified to provide consistency with the overall County transportation goals addressed above as well as the new proposed goals contained in the Alpine County General Plan update (2009).

- Goal 1: Provide and maintain a safe, efficient, and convenient countywide roadway system that meets the travel needs of people and goods throughout and within the region.
- Goal 2: Upgrade and maintain roadways in order to preserve the county roadway system.
- Goal 3: Provide for the mobility needs of county residents, visitors and employees within the financial constraints of state and federal transit funding.
- Goal 4: Maintain the alpine county airport as a safe and operable general aviation facility. Expand airport services only if additional funding is available beyond CAAP annual grant program.
- Goal 5: Provide for the safe and efficient movement of goods through and within alpine county
- Goal 6: Promote a safe, convenient and efficient non-motorized transportation system that is part of a balanced overall transportation system.
- Goal 7: Fulfill the parking needs of local citizens, travelers and tourists
- Goal 8: Promote the use of alternative transportation to reduce the negative impacts of single occupant vehicle travel and to increase mobility for alpine county residents.
- Goal 9: Enhance sensitivity to the environment in all transportation decisions.

#### **Other Public Agencies Whose Approval Is Required (e.g., Permits, etc.)**

Alpine County will be the Lead Agency for the proposed project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Section 15050. No specific permits are required to approve the proposed project. Future permit approvals vary among projects and may include, but are not necessarily limited to: Caltrans, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, and the California Transportation Commission.

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 Alpine County Boundary



1:400,000

0 5 10 Miles

**NORTH** Data Sources: ESRI

Alpine County Regional Transportation Plan  
Regional Location

**gallaway**  
**ENTERPRISES**

GE# 15-004 Map Date: 09/18/15

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## Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

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

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

---

Brian Peters, ACLTC Program Manager

Date

## Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

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

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

# Environmental Checklist

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

## I. AESTHETICS -- WOULD THE PROJECT:

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

### RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Response a-d): Less than Significant.** State Highways 88, 89 and 4 are designated State Scenic Highways. Highway 4 includes the Nationally Designated Ebbetts Pass Scenic Byway in Alpine County. The proposed project does not entitle, propose, or otherwise require the construction of new roadways. The proposed project includes a variety of roadway improvement projects, which consist primarily of roadway rehabilitation efforts and roadway safety improvements. There are no new roadways proposed as part of the 2015 RTP update, and as such, the proposed project would not lead to indirect population growth as a result of access improvements into areas that are currently undeveloped. The proposed project identifies roadway and multimodal transportation improvement funding priorities that will be implemented over the next 20 years. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant or adverse changes to the visual quality of the County, and would not result in the introduction of increased nighttime lighting or daytime glare. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES --WOULD THE PROJECT:**

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

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

According to the 2009 Alpine County General Plan, 95 percent of the land in the County is publicly owned and designated as wilderness or open space. The remaining 5 percent is in agriculture, residential and commercial type land uses. There are less than 10 farms in the county according to the 2012 Census of Agriculture. Primary commodities include hay and cattle. According to the 2013 Alpine County Annual Crop and Livestock Report, the 2012 gross production of agricultural commodities was valued at \$265,000. Alpine County has adopted the Williamson Act program, but has yet to execute a contract on behalf of willing landowners.

**Response a): No Impact.** Implementation of the proposed project would allow for roadway and multimodal transportation improvements throughout the County over the next 20 years. The proposed project would not result in the conversion of any agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses, and as such, would have no impact on any Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland or Farmland of Statewide importance. There is no impact and no mitigation is required.

**Response b): No Impact.** The proposed project does not propose any changes to General Plan land use designations or zoning districts, and would have no impact on zoning for agricultural use. The proposed project would not result in conflicts with any Williamson Act contracts, nor would it result in the cancellation of any Williamson Act contracts. Implementation of the proposed project will have no impact on a Williamson Act contract, and no mitigation is required.

**Response c): No Impact.** See responses a) and b) above. The proposed project will have no impact on agricultural lands or operations.

**III. AIR QUALITY -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?			X	
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?			X	
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?			X	
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?			X	

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

Alpine County is located within the Great Basin valleys - Air Basin (GBVAB), so named because its geologic formation is that of a basin, with the surrounding mountains trapping the air and its pollutants in the valleys and basins.

Alpine County is currently non-attainment for state PM10 standards, but not federal PM10 standards. Primary sources of PM10 pollution include wood stoves, open and prescribed burning, wind-blown dust generated from unpaved roads and agriculture. Alpine County is also unclassified for state ozone standards, and federal 8-hour ozone standards.

**Alpine County Air Pollution Control District**

The Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District (GBUAPCD) is the regional government agency that works to protect the people and the environment of Alpine, Mono and Inyo Counties from the harmful effects of air pollution. The GBUAPCD is responsible for the preparation of plans for the attainment and maintenance of Ambient Air Quality Standards (AAQS), adoption and enforcement of rules and regulations for sources of air pollution, and issuance of permits for stationary sources of air pollution.

The GBUAPCD also inspects stationary sources of air pollution, regulates agricultural burning, responds to citizen complaints, monitors ambient air quality and meteorological conditions, and implements programs and regulations required by federal and state air quality regulations.

The GBUAPCD works to ensure a coordinated approach in the development and implementation of transportation plans throughout the County. This coordination ensures compliance with pertinent provisions of the federal and state Clean Air Acts, as well as related transportation legislation (such as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, Transportation Conformity, and Transportation Improvement Plans).

**Responses a-e): Less Than Significant.** It is the intention of the RTP to rehabilitate the current road base and improve existing and future circulation within the County wherever possible. With this focus, improvements in the RTP may benefit regional air quality by reducing congestion on major roads within the County. Some of the route improvements contemplated in the RTP could have direct impacts on air quality, sensitive receptors, or create objectionable odors on a project-specific basis during construction. The Clean Air Act sets national ambient air quality standards for various air pollutants, including carbon monoxide, ozone, oxides of nitrogen, sulfur dioxide and particulate matter.

Individual projects contemplated in the RTP will be subject to project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction. Measures, such as construction best management practices (BMPS), may be required for individual projects to reduce temporary short-term construction related impacts to air quality.

The project would not result in any indirect or cumulatively adverse impacts on air quality, as the project would not result in increased vehicle trips within the County or an overall increase in vehicle miles travelled as a result of implementation of the RTP.

The proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the air quality plan, or violate any air quality standard.

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

In January 2007, the Legislature asked the CTC to review the RTP guidelines to incorporate climate change emission reduction measures. The request emphasized that RTPs should utilize models that accurately measure the benefits of land use strategies aimed at reducing vehicle trips and/or trip length. The CTC staff established an RTP guidelines work group to assist in the development of “best practices” for inclusion in the RTP Guidelines. The Addendum to the 2007 RTP Guidelines (May 29, 2008) provides several recommendations for consideration by rural RTPAs to address GHG. The following strategies from the 2010 RTP guidelines have specific application to Alpine County.

- Emphasize transportation investments in areas where desired land uses as indicated in a city or County general plan may result in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction or other lower impact use.
- Recognize the rural contribution towards GHG reduction for counties that have policies that support development within their cities, and protect agricultural and resource lands.
- Consider transportation projects that increase connectivity or provide other means to reduce VMT.

The transportation planning literature recognizes three interrelated components that contribute to transportation emissions reductions. Those components include changes in vehicle technology (cleaner burning engines), alternative fuel sources, and vehicle use. The first two components are typically the responsibility of industry and national governmental interests. RTPAs and local

governments have the ability to affect *vehicle use* by promoting transportation alternatives to the automobile, and by managing the demand for transportation. These efforts typically involve goals and policies and/or projects and programs focused on getting people out of their cars and into non-auto modes of travel (mode shifting).

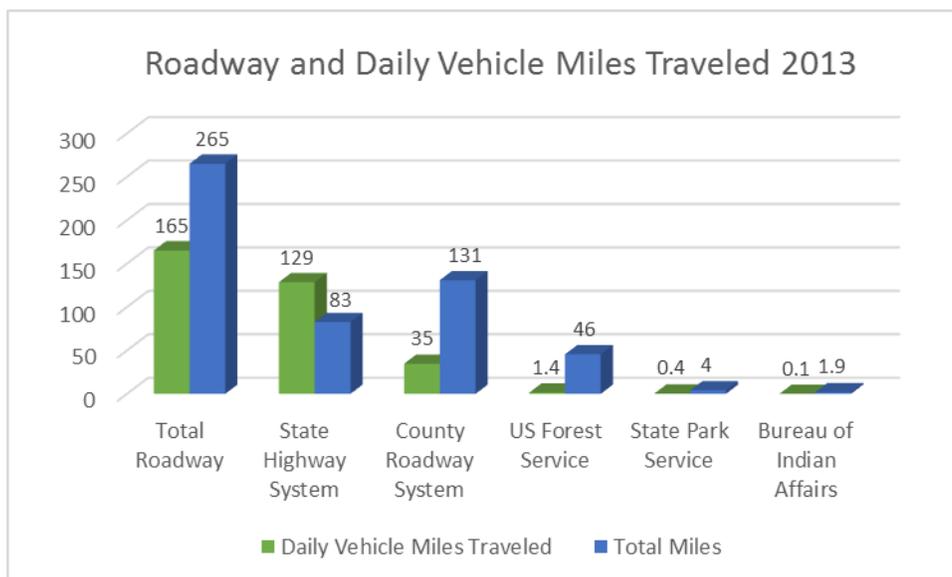
The following RTP goals are established for Alpine County to lessen dependence on the automobile and to promote mode shifting to other forms of transportation.

- Goal 1: Provide and maintain a safe, efficient, and convenient countywide roadway system that meets the travel needs of people and goods throughout and within the region.
- Goal 3: Provide for the mobility needs of county residents, visitors and employees within the financial constraints of state and federal transit funding.
- Goal 6: Promote a safe, convenient and efficient non-motorized transportation system that is part of a balanced overall transportation system.
- Goal 8: Promote the use of alternative transportation to reduce the negative impacts of single occupant vehicle travel and to increase mobility for alpine county residents.
- Goal 9: Enhance sensitivity to the environment in all transportation decisions.

The effectiveness of efforts by the RTPA to provide transportation alternatives and to implement TDM and TSM policies and strategies can be measured in terms of reductions in VMT or the expected growth in VMT. VMT reductions and speed correlate directly with reductions in GHG emissions.

Caltrans reports VMT by County on an annual basis. The daily vehicle miles travelled exceeds the total mileage of roadway in the case of the State Highway System, meaning some vehicles may be making more than one trip per day. In all other cases, daily vehicle miles traveled is significantly lower than total roadway mileage.

Figure 2: Roadway and Daily Vehicle Miles Traveled 2013



In recent years, Alpine County has experienced decreasing growth (approximately 0.48 percent change per year) in population and employment, and is forecasted to continue this trend through 2035. Based on this trend and the guidelines established in the 2010 RTP guidelines, the County is not required to run a network travel demand model to estimate VMT. The guidelines cite the lack of road congestion and the fact that emission changes from higher-MPG vehicles will continue to help the County comply with future emission caps established by the California Air Resources Board as part of AB 32.

The Alpine County 2015 RTP recognizes that TDM and other non-auto mobility options, including walking, biking and transit, require coordinated land use decisions and improved infrastructure. To this degree, the goals and policies in the RTP are consistent with the County's proposed general plan revisions to provide a balanced multi-modal transportation system that includes non-auto choices for access and mobility. Goals proposed in the 2009 GP revision and update emphasize the following:

- Goal No. 38 provide for the transit needs of the county in a timely and economic fashion
- Goal No. 40 develop bicycle circulation and support facilities where safe and reasonable
- Goal No. 41 develop pedestrian circulation for the betterment of local commerce as well as the safety and convenience of local citizens
- Goal No. 43 establish winter trails for cross-country ski and snowmobile use

The County is committed to implementing these types of policies and strategies that reduce reliance on the automobile and contribute to the reduction of GHG. As such, the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts to air quality and global climate change, and no mitigation is required.

**IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			X	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service?			X X	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			X	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?			X	
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?			X	
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?			X	

The Central Sierra Nevada is the dominant land feature, with the Carson and Antelope Valleys bordering on the east. The County's topography is characterized by high rugged peaks and ridges, deep canyons, mountain meadows, and numerous streams and lakes. Alpine County extends from high elevations (+11,000 feet) at Sonora Peak to the low elevations (+4,700 feet) in the mountain valleys. As a result of such major changes in elevation, Alpine County includes a great variety of climatic, soils and geographic conditions which, in turn, influence the distribution, variety, and abundance of the plant and animal species within the County. It is estimated that ninety five percent of Alpine County's land area is government owned and administered by the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management.

The 2015 RTP includes a review and comparison with the California State Wildlife Action Plan. According to the Wildlife Action Plan, the major stressors in the Sierra Nevada and Cascades Region that Alpine County is are of are as follows:

Stressors affecting upland habitats	Stressors affecting aquatic and riparian habitats
Growth and land development	Water diversions and dams
Forest management conflicts	Watershed fragmentation and fish barriers
Altered fire regimes	Hydropower project operations
Excessive livestock grazing	Excessive livestock grazing
Invasive plants	Water diversions from the Owens Valley
Recreational pressures	Introduced non-native fish
Climate change	

A review of county-wide species list using the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Sacramento Office Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPaC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW) Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), the California Native Plant Society’s (CNPS) list of rare and endangered plants was performed. The information in the species lists includes known occurrences and historical occurrences of species listed as threatened, endangered or otherwise protected under policies or ordinances at the local or regional level as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA, §15380). The species lists indicate that there are six endangered or threatened animal species and seven plants species that are either threatened or protected under CEQA. Twenty-six bird species are considered Birds of Conservation Concern. There is also proposed critical habitat for two amphibians.

#### RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Response a-f): Less than Significant.** The proposed project does not propose the construction of new roadways in areas of the County that have previously been undisturbed. Nearly all of the roadway projects identified in the RTP consist of rehabilitation efforts, which would occur within the roadbeds of the existing roadways, and would not have the potential to impact any special status species or habitat. Individual projects identified in the RTP that may include the widening of a particular roadway would be subject to project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction of the improvements. This future project-level environmental review of individual projects would identify the potential for impacts to any special status species, habitat, or wetlands. As such, implementation of the proposed project would not directly or indirectly impact any biological resources, wetland resources, or conflict with any habitat conservation plan or local ordinance protecting natural and biological resources. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**V. CULTURAL RESOURCES -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

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

Alpine County, California, has a uniquely rich historic and prehistoric heritage. The County lies within the traditional Washoe aboriginal lands: the mountains and valleys of Alpine County have provided subsistence and spiritual sustenance to the Washoe millennia. Euro-American travel through the County and its later settlement are equally of interest and importance to the people of Alpine County, for the County’s identity is closely related to these historic events.

Prehistoric and historic resources are valuable to the people of Alpine County in many different ways: recreation opportunities, community identity, aesthetic beauty, spiritual importance, and historic interest. Prehistoric, historic, and contemporary cultural resources could be located anywhere within the County. No comprehensive inventory of cultural resource sites within Alpine County exists.

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

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

**VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS** -- Would the project:

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:			X	
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.			X	
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?			X	
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?			X	
iv) Landslides?			X	
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?			X	
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off- site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?			X	
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?			X	
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?			X	

Alpine County is underlain predominately by volcanic and granitic rocks. The volcanic rocks are predominant in the eastern part of the County, while granitic rocks are most abundant in the west. Small masses of metamorphic rocks occur in the northern part of the county. The valleys are underlain by alluvium. There are a few glacial moraines. Although much of Alpine County was shaped by glaciation during the Pleistocene Epoch, only a few glacial moraines exist and none is very extensive. Moraines are located near Lake Alpine and Union Reservoir in the southwest part of the County, near Grover Hot Springs, near Silver Mountain City, at the head of upper Carson Valley, and northeast of the Carson Pass. The moraines are composed of rough angular boulders of all sizes mixed with sand, gravel, and finer detritus. Alluvial deposits occupy the valleys, the most extensive deposits being in the upper Carson Valley and Hope Valley. The alluvium consists of silt, sand, and gravel in and adjacent to the present stream channels.

## RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

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

*Fault Rupture.* A fault rupture occurs when the surface of the earth breaks as a result of an earthquake, although this does not happen with all earthquakes. These ruptures generally occur in a weak area of an existing fault. Ruptures can be sudden (i.e. earthquake) or slow (i.e. fault creep). The Alquist-Priolo Fault Zoning Act requires active earthquake fault zones to be mapped and it provides special development considerations within these zones. While it is possible for a fault rupture throughout seismically active areas of California, there are no Alquist-Priolo Fault zones within **Alpine** County.

*Seismic Ground Shaking.* The potential for seismic ground shaking in California is expected. As a result of the foreseeable seismicity in California, the State requires special design considerations for all structural improvements in accordance with the seismic design provisions in the California Building Code. These seismic design provisions require enhanced structural integrity based on several risk parameters. Any future roadway improvements implemented as a result of adoption of the RTP would be subject to detailed engineering requirements to ensure structural integrity consistent with the requirements of state law. As such, implementation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact from seismic ground shaking.

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

*Landslides.* Landslides include rockfalls, deep slope failure, and shallow slope failure. Factors such as the geological conditions, drainage, slope, vegetation, and others directly affect the potential for landslides. One of the most common causes of landslides is construction activity that is associated with road building (i.e. cut and fill). The projects identified in the RTP consist primarily of roadway maintenance and improvement projects, and would occur within the existing right of way of the County's roadway system. As such, the potential for impacts related to landslides is considered less than significant.

*Lateral Spreading.* Lateral spreading typically results when ground shaking moves soil toward an area where the soil integrity is weak or unsupported, and it typically occurs on the surface of a slope, although it does not occur strictly on steep slopes. Oftentimes, lateral spreading is directly associated with areas of liquefaction. Any future roadway improvements implemented as a result of adoption of the RTP would be subject to detailed engineering requirements to ensure structural integrity consistent with the requirements of state law. As such, implementation of the proposed project would result in a less than significant impact from lateral spreading.

*Erosion.* Erosion naturally occurs on the surface of the earth as surface materials (i.e. rock, soil, debris, etc.) is loosened, dissolved, or worn away, and transported from one place to another by gravity. Two common types of soil erosion include wind erosion and water erosion. The steepness of a slope is an important factor that affects soil erosion. Erosion potential in soils is influenced primarily by loose soil texture and steep slopes. Loose soils can be eroded by water or wind forces, whereas soils with high clay content are generally susceptible only to water erosion. The potential for erosion generally increases as a result of human activity, primarily through the development of facilities and impervious surfaces and the removal of vegetative cover. Future roadway improvement projects would be required to implement measures during construction, including various BMPs, that would reduce potential impacts related to erosion. This is considered a less than significant impact.

*Expansive Soils.* Expansive soils are those that shrink or swell with the change in moisture content. The volume of change is influenced by the quantity of moisture, by the kind and amount of clay in the soil, and by the original porosity of the soil. Shrinking and swelling can damage roads and structures unless special engineering design is incorporated into the project plans.

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

**VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

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

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

The RTP includes goals, policies, and strategies aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Alpine County. RTP projects such as roadway and bridge repairs are necessary to maintain a safe regional transportation system and to prevent deterioration of roadways and bridges which may require costlier repairs in the future. These projects will not result in greater traffic volumes along state highways or County roads. To the degree that keeping an existing travel route open avoids travel via longer alternative routes that would accompany a closure, maintaining existing roadways and bridges can help to avoid increases in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The RTP also includes long-term bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects which will create more bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities and potentially further reduce VMT. The RTP also includes public transit elements. By expanding alternative forms of transportation, Alpine 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.

**VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?				X
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?			X	
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?			X	
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?			X	

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-c): No Impact.** A “hazardous material” is a substance or combination of substances that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may pose a potential hazard to human health or the environment when handled improperly. The proposed project does not propose new development or any use that would result in the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Furthermore, the proposed project would not result in a foreseeable upset, accident, or emission of hazardous materials. Implementation of the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

**Responses d): No Impact.** There is no locations in **Alpine** County that are registered with the Department of Toxic Substances Control and included on the Cortese List. Implementation of the proposed project would have no impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

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

**Response g): Less than Significant.** The proposed project would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The improvements identified in the RTP would improve the transportation network in Alpine County, which would serve to improve emergency response times countywide. Construction activities associated with projects identified within the RTP may result in temporary lane closures that may temporarily impede emergency access to certain areas within the County during construction. However, each improvement project, when undertaken, will include measures to ensure that emergency access is not adversely impeded. Implementation of the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic and no mitigation is required.

**Response h): Less than Significant.** Wild fires are a major hazard in the State of California. Wild fires burn natural vegetation on developed and undeveloped lands and include timber, brush, woodland, and grass fires. While low intensity wild fires have a role in the ecosystem, wild fires put human health and safety, structures (e.g., homes, schools, businesses, etc.), air quality, recreation areas, water quality, wildlife habitat and ecosystem health, and forest resources at risk.

The proposed project consists primarily of projects that will improve and rehabilitate roadways throughout the County. There are no new homes, business or habitable structures proposed as part of the RTP. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in increased risks associated with wild fires. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

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

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Response a-j): Less than Significant.** Implementation of the proposed project would result in the improvement and rehabilitation of roadways and transportation infrastructure throughout Alpine County. The project would not result in the development or construction of housing or other habitable structures that would be at risk from flooding events. There are a small number of projects identified within the RTP that may increase the area of impervious surfaces within the

County. Such improvements consist primarily of roadway widening to address safety and operational concerns. The amount of impervious surfaces that may be added to the County as a result of project implementation is negligible, and would not result in impacts to groundwater recharge rates. The improvements identified in the RTP would not result in increased uses of ground or surface water, and would not directly or indirectly lead to population growth. As such, the project would not result in an increased demand for ground or surface water resources, and would have no impact on these environmental topics.

There is the potential for water quality impacts to occur during construction activities associated with the various projects identified in the RTP. Each project is subject to further project-level environmental review prior to approval and construction. During subsequent environmental review, potential project-specific construction impacts to water quality would be identified, and mitigation measures, in the form of BMPs would be identified and implemented to ensure that impacts to water quality are reduced or avoided. Impacts to these environmental topics are considered less than significant and no mitigation is required.

**x. LAND USE AND PLANNING - *Would the project:***

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?				X

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-c): No Impact.** Implementation of the proposed project would result in improvements to the County’s transportation network. There are no changes to land uses or land use designations proposed as part of the RTP. The County General Plan was reviewed during preparation of the RTP, and the RTP is consistent with these documents. No housing would be removed as part of the proposed project, and there are no new roadways proposed that would divide an established community. Implementation of the RTP would not conflict with a habitat conservation plan. There are no impacts to land use associated with the proposed project and no mitigation is required.

**XI. MINERAL RESOURCES -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?				X
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?				X

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Response a-b): No Impact.** The Office of Mine Reclamation periodically publishes a list of mines regulated under SMARA that is generally referred to as the AB 3098 List. The Public Contract Code precludes mining operations that are not on the AB 3098 List from selling sand, gravel, aggregates or other mined materials to state or local agencies. The current AB 3098 list (July 3, 2015) indicates that there are no active mines regulated under SMARA. Recently in 2012 the AB 3098 list identified three mines; Merrill barrow pit, Gansberg sand, and the Fredericksburg Gravel pit.

There are no active mines located within the areas proposed for improvement in the RTP. The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource or mineral resource recovery site. Implementation of the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on this environmental topic.

**XII. NOISE -- WOULD THE PROJECT RESULT IN:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?			X	
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?			X	
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?			X	
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?			X	

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-f): Less than Significant.** Implementation of the proposed project consists primarily of improvements to the existing transportation network in Alpine County. There are no new roadways proposed that would introduce new vehicle trips into areas not currently exposed to mobile noise sources from the existing transportation network. The improvements identified in the RTP would not directly result in increased vehicle trips on the County roadway network, and would therefore, not result in increased noise levels from vehicles travelling on existing roadways and transportation facilities in the County. The improvements to aviation facilities identified in the RTP would not result in increased or expanded flight operations, and would not result in increased noise from aviation sources.

Construction activities associated with the various improvements identified in the RTP could result in short-term temporary noise impacts in the immediate vicinity of the improvements. These noise increases would be temporary in nature, and construction activities in the vicinity of residences and other sensitive noise receptors would usually be limited to the daytime hours. However, as described throughout this initial study, subsequent environmental review of project-specific impacts would be required prior to approval and implementation of future improvements. This future environmental review would identify the potential for short-term construction noise impacts to sensitive receptors, and assign mitigation measures as needed to reduce noise impacts. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?			X	
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?			X	

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

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

#### XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?			X	
Police protection?			X	
Schools?			X	
Parks?			X	
Other public facilities?			X	

#### RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-e): Less than Significant.** As described throughout this initial study, the proposed project (adoption of the RTP) consists primarily of the rehabilitation and improvement of the existing transportation network in Alpine County. The projects included in the RTP would not extend roadway infrastructure into areas not currently served, and would not result in the direct or indirect growth of the County’s population. As such, the demand for increased public services, including police protection, fire protection, schools, parks and other public facilities would not increase as a result of implementation of the proposed project. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

## XV. RECREATION

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?			X	
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?			X	

### RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-b): Less than Significant.** As described throughout this initial study, the proposed project (adoption of the RTP) consists primarily of the rehabilitation and improvement of the existing transportation network in Alpine County. The projects included in the RTP would not extend roadway infrastructure into areas not currently served, and would not result in the direct or indirect growth of the County's population. As such, the demand for increased recreational facilities would not increase as a result of implementation of the proposed project. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

	<i>Potentially Significant Impact</i>	<i>Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation</i>	<i>Less Than Significant Impact</i>	<i>No Impact</i>
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?			X	
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?			X	
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?			X	
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?			X	
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?			X	

Existing Traffic Volumes and LOS

LOS Methodology

LOS is a qualitative description of traffic flow from the perspective of motorists based on factors such as speed, travel time, delay, freedom to maneuver, volume, and capacity. Six levels are defined in the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM 2010)) from LOS A, as the least congested operating conditions, to LOS F, or the most congested operating conditions. Table 1 defines each LOS designation.

Table 1: LOS Definitions / Characteristics

LOS	Description
A	Represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of other in the traffic stream
B	Stable flow, but the presence of others in the traffic stream begins to be noticeable.
C	Stable flow, but marks the beginning of the range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interaction with others in the traffic stream.
D	Represents high density, but stable flow.
E	Represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level.
F	Represents forced or a breakdown in traffic flow.
Source: Highway Capacity Manual - Transportation Research Board, 2010.	

Table 3 provides the maximum standard daily capacity thresholds for each type of roadway in **Alpine** County. These capacity thresholds were updated from the 2009 Alpine County GP using the 2010 HCM. The LOS designations in Table 4 and 5 were determined by comparing traffic volumes to Table 3.

Table 2: Maximum Daily Volume Thresholds for Highway Segments

Classification	LOS				
	A	B	C	D	E
4-Lane Major Freeway <sup>1</sup>	25,40	41,60	58,40	71,00	79,20
2-Lane, Class I Highway <sup>1</sup>	1,200	3,700	7,600	13,60	21,00
2-Lane, Class II Highway <sup>1</sup>	1,700	4,100	8,200	16,60	21,20
Rural Principal Arterial (2	2,600	5,900	10,30	16,90	20,20
Rural Minor Arterial (2 lane)	1,200	3,300	6,400	11,00	15,50
Urban Arterial (4 lane)	18,00	21,00	24,00	27,00	30,00
Urban Arterial (2 lane)	9,000	10,50	12,00	13,50	15,00
Urban Major Collector (2 lane)	7,620	8,890	10,16	11,43	12,70
Urban Minor Collector (2	4,800	5,600	6,400	7,200	8,000
Rural Major Collector (2 lane)	1,300	3,900	7,500	12,60	16,90
Rural Minor Collector (2 lane)	1000	3,000	5,500	8,750	11,20
Urban Local Road	2,700	3,150	3,600	4,050	4,500
Rural Local Road	600	2,000	3,500	4,900	5,500
Notes: <sup>1</sup> Based on the 2010 Highway Capacity Manual, Chapters 20 and 22, which provided maximum peak hour flows. The values in this table were converted to daily travel using the peak period percent (approximately 10 percent) for these facilities.					

## Existing Traffic Counts and LOS

Table 3 provides a summary of the State highways within the County and the current average annual daily traffic and LOS designation. All locations currently meet State concept LOS.

Table 3: Existing AADT and LOS on State Highways

Average Annual Daily Traffic and LOS on State Highways, 2013			
Route	Description	AADT	LOS
SR 4	Calaveras County - Alpine County	1150	A
	Mount Reba Road	1225	B
	Lake Alpine	1075	A
	Bullion, JCT. RTE 89	560	A
	Ebbetts Pass Summit	490	A
SR 88	Amador - Apine County Line	2500	B
	Caples lake	2200	B
	Carson Pass Summit	2475	B
	Picketts, West JCT. SR 89	2575	B
	Nevada State Line	3400	C
	Woodfords, East JCT ER 89	3100	B
SR 89	Mono - Alpine County Line	390	A
	Bullion, JCT SR 4 West	630	A
	Laramie St.	785	A
	Markleeville, Webster St.	975	A
	Alp/Ed Co Line, Luther Pass	2450	B
	Picketts, West JCT. SR 88	2400	B
SR 207	JCT. SR 4	750	B
	Mt. Reba Ski Resort	740	B

## RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a-b): Less than Significant.** Implementation of the proposed RTP would result in improvements and rehabilitation to the existing transportation and roadway network in Alpine County.

Table 5 provides traffic forecasts for the State highways in the County. The future volumes were calculated from Caltrans' historical average growth trends based on their highway count data. Compounded growth rates for each facility were then applied to existing counts to arrive at estimates for 2035. All facilities are forecast to operate within the concept LOS through 2035.

Due to the very minor predicted increase in AADT throughout the lifetime of this RTP, few changes are expected in the LOS ratings of state routes in Alpine County. In 2035, all highway segments are expected to be operating at an acceptable LOS rating. State Route 88 from Woodfords to the Nevada State line is the most impacted roadway in Alpine County. The addition of several left-turn pockets on this section of highway will assist in maintaining traffic flow by allowing slowing vehicles to exit the main roadway.

Table 5: Existing and Future AADT on State Highways

Average Annual Daily Traffic on State Highways, Existing and Future			
Route	Description	AADT, 2013	AADT, 2035
SR 4	Calaveras County - Alpine County	1150	1250
	Mount Reba Road	1225	1330
	Lake Alpine	1075	1170
	Bullion, JCT. RTE 89	560	610
	Ebbetts Pass Summit	490	535
SR 88	Amador - Apine County Line	2500	2720
	Caples lake	2200	2395
	Carson Pass Summit	2475	2690
	Picketts, West JCT. SR 89	2575	2800
	Nevada State Line	3400	3700
	Woodfords, East JCT ER 89	3100	3370
SR 89	Mono - Alpine County Line	390	425
	Bullion, JCT SR 4 West	630	685
	Laramie St.	785	855
	Markleeville, Webster St.	975	1060
	Alp/Ed Co Line, Luther Pass	2450	2665
	Picketts, West JCT. SR 88	2400	2610
SR 207	JCT. SR 4	750	815
	Mt. Reba Ski Resort	740	805

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in population growth within Alpine County, and would not directly result in decreases in LOS on area roadways. The proposed project would improve traffic flows and operations throughout the County, and would not result in an LOS that exceeds applicable standards or thresholds, as described above. This is a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

**Responses c-f): Less than Significant.** As described throughout this initial study, implementation of the proposed project would assist in the improvement of the County’s transportation network across all modes of transit and transportation. The improvements proposed to aviation facilities in the County would not result in an increase in flights or a change in flight patterns. There are policies and programs included in the RTP that would improve public access to transit systems and alternative modes of transit, such as bicycle use. The various roadways improvements identified in the RTP would assist in the delivery of emergency services by improving the local and regional roadway network and eliminating existing design and safety hazards. The RTP and the projects included within were developed after careful review of the General Plan of the County. The RTP is consistent with the circulation element of the General Plan, and would not result in conflicts or inconsistencies with the above referenced plans. This is considered a less than significant impact and not mitigation is required.

**XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS -- WOULD THE PROJECT:**

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

**RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS**

**Responses a-g): Less than Significant.** Refer to Section VIII- Hydrology and Water Quality for a description of water supply and wastewater disposal.

The project consists of various roadway and transportation network improvement projects throughout the County. The project would not result in direct or indirect population growth, and as such, would not increase the demand for water supplies or the treatment and/or conveyance of wastewater. The various roadway and infrastructure improvements may require modifications or expansions to existing and future stormwater conveyance infrastructure adjacent to roadways proposed for rehabilitation or modification. As described throughout this initial study, projects identified in the RTP would be subject to project-level environmental review to determine if potential impacts to the County’s stormwater detention and conveyance infrastructure may occur. This future project-specific environmental review may include mitigation measures, as appropriate, to avoid or lessen potential impacts to the stormwater infrastructure adjacent to roadway and other improvement projects. Implementation of the projects identified in the RTP would not generate significant amounts of solid waste, and would not result in an exceedance of any landfill’s capacity or violate any state, federal or local statues related to the disposal of solid waste. This is considered a less than significant impact and no mitigation is required.

## XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

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

### RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

**Responses a), b), c): Less than Significant.** As described throughout the analysis above, the proposed project will not result in any changes to General Plan land use designations or zoning districts, would not result in annexation of land, and would not allow development in areas that are not already planned for development in the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The proposed project would not result in new adverse environmental impacts. The project would not threaten a significant biological resource, nor would it eliminate important examples California history or prehistory. The proposed project does not have impacts that are cumulatively considerable, nor would it have substantial adverse effects on human beings. Implementation of the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on these environmental topics.

## References

Alpine County General Plan- (2009)

Alpine County Annual Crop and Livestock Report (Alpine County Agricultural Commissioner, 2013)

Alpine County RTP Draft (Green DOT Transportation Solutions, 2015)

California Important Farmlands 2012 Map (California Department of Conservation, June 2012)

California State Wildlife Action Plan. (2015)

Cal EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control, September 2015, Cortese List

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California Department of Conservation, Mine Reclamation AB 3098 List (September 2015)

Inventory of California Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990 to 2004. (Staff Final Report), (California Energy Commission, 2006)

Mines and Mineral Resources of Alpine County, Ca, William Clark California Division of Mines and Geology Sacramento 1977.

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