

# 4.7 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

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## INTRODUCTION

This section describes existing transportation and circulation features and conditions within the county and assesses the changes to these conditions resulting from implementation of the RTP and projected future growth.

## SETTING

Travel demand and patterns within Placer County are influenced by three primary factors: commute patterns, interstate truck travel, and recreational travel. Particularly in the south county, proximity to the employment centers of south Placer County and Sacramento County dictate commute patterns. Interstate 80 (I-80) is one of the major interstate freeways in the country, linking major cities across the nation from San Francisco to New Jersey. As such, this route is an important link for interstate commerce and trade. More significantly on a local scale, I-80 links the San Francisco Bay Area with the Tahoe basin and Reno, and provides an important link along virtually the entire length of Placer County. Recreational travel dominates weekend and holiday travel through the county along I-80, while interstate truck travel and commute patterns dominate this route throughout the week.

Placer County residential development is predominantly single-family detached homes on large lots and acreages. This type of residential development does not lend itself to cost-effective or efficient service by public transportation. Travel and commute mode choice, therefore, is primarily private automobile. Public transportation is provided in the south Placer County region as well as Auburn and Colfax. This public transit serves primarily transit dependent patrons. In the Roseville area, special commuter services are provided through express-bus service into Sacramento County. Park-and-Ride lots are provided along with major commute routes and enjoy high usage in Placer County, indicative of carpooling success.

## **Major Street and Highway System**

### **Existing Roadway Network**

The existing roadway network in Placer County is shown in Figure 4.7-1. This network is centered around the major transportation facilities of I-80, State Route (SR) 49 and SR 65.

The south county and foothill areas are serviced by I-80 providing a major route traversing the county from the southwest to the northeast. SR 65 intersects I-80

at Roseville, and links Roseville and Lincoln to I-80. SR 65 also connects with SR 70 in Yuba County which connects Placer County with Yuba County and Marysville. SR 193 provides a connection through the foothills from SR 65 at Lincoln to Newcastle and I-80.

In the valley portion of the south county, Baseline Road forms a major east-west connector with the City of Roseville and unincorporated areas of residential development to the west of the city limits. Watt Avenue provides a convenient north-south connector in this area, and strengthens the linkage of the south county with Sacramento to the south. Similar linkages are provided between the Roseville and Rocklin area and the Carmichael/Orangevale areas of Sacramento County by Sunrise Avenue and Sierra College Boulevard which connect to the south with major north-south arterial roadways in Sacramento County and eventually to Highway 50.

At Auburn, SR 49 provides a major north-south route connecting mountainous communities from Nevada City in the north to Auburn and Placerville in the south. South of I-80, SR 49 also provides an important crossing of the American River north of Cool.

Northeast of Auburn the roadway network is dominated by I-80, with Foresthill Road and Placer Hills Road providing rural access to southeast and northwest of I-80 respectively. At Colfax, SR 174 provides a connection to SR 20 in Nevada County at Grass Valley.

SR 20 connects to I-80 northeast of Colfax along the Nevada County/Placer County border just east of Emigrant Gap. From here, I-80 provides the only all-season roadway through to the Tahoe basin, where I-80 intersects with SR 89 and SR 267 at Truckee just north of the Placer County border.

SR 89 provides an important north-south corridor through the heart of the Sierra Nevada from SR 70 at Quincy in the north (Plumas County) to SR 4 south of Markleeville in the south (Alpine County). SR 89 also circumnavigates the western shore of Lake Tahoe connecting I-80 to the north shore of Lake Tahoe. SR 89 provides an east-west connector between Tahoe City and Kings Beach areas. SR 267 lies on the western shore of Lake Tahoe.

## **Vehicular Transportation**

Table 4-7.1<sup>1</sup> shows vehicle registration totals for Placer County from 1990 through 2000. Registrations during the decade grew by 33%; however, during the same period the population grew by 42%, thereby decreasing the number of vehicles registered per person from 1.13 to 1.06.

**TABLE 4.7-1**

YEAR	Placer County Vehicle Registrations					Population
	Autos	Trucks	Trailers	Motorcycles	TOTAL	July 1
1990	113,730	51,382	29,752	5,277	200,141	177,400
1991	115,447	46,778	26,879	5,542	194,646	186,000
1992	117,389	46,325	26,567	5,288	195,569	193,100
1993	120,685	47,167	28,460	5,204	201,516	199,300
1994	123,014	47,933	27,599	5,283	203,829	204,800
1995	128,093	48,702	29,859	5,369	212,023	213,400
1996	133,021	50,921	30,538	5,510	219,990	220,300
1997	130,248	49,097	31,010	4,354	214,709	228,000
1998	143,552	53,777	31,808	4,627	233,764	235,400
1999	150,410	55,859	34,692	5,085	246,046	245,500
2000	161,376	59,225	40,066	5,811	266,478	251,800

Sources:

Registrations - CA Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

Population - CA Dept of Finance, Demographic Research Unit

Average rate of growth in VMT over the period from 1996 to 2007 is projected to be 40.8%. From 1996 to 2030, VMT is projected to grow by 121.7% and for the period from 2007 to 2030, VMT is projected to grow by 57.4%.<sup>2</sup> Efforts to reduce VMT through park-and-ride lots along major commute routes and express commuter bus service from Roseville have generally been successful.

### Existing Traffic Conditions

Traffic conditions are typically described using a classification system referred to as Level of Service (LOS). LOS is a qualitative measure of traffic operating conditions. Letter grades A through F represent progressively worsening traffic conditions. LOS is a function of travel speed, travel time, delay, volumes, and density (e.g. vehicles per land per mile). The stated objective of Placer County and the jurisdictions within is to maintain a LOS C operating condition on streets and highways on a daily basis and at intersections during the peak hour. There are LOS exceptions in some situations (e.g., ¼ mile of a state facility). Table 4.7-2 summarizes the RTP LOS definitions.

**TABLE 4.7-2  
LEVEL OF SERVICE DESCRIPTIONS**

Level of Service	Description
A	Represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others 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 the interactions 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 breakdown of flow.

Source: Highway Capacity Manual – Special Report 209, Transportation Research Board, 1985.

**Public Transportation**

**Transit**

As identified in Table 4.7-3, several local transit agencies provide service in Placer County.

**TABLE 4.7-3  
TRANSIT SERVICES SUMMARY**

<b>Transit Operator</b>	<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Fares</b>
Placer County Transit	Fixed route Deviated fixed route Paratransit Commuter bus Commuter vanpools	Western Placer County from Alta to Sacramento	Fixed route: \$.75 general \$.60 disabled/senior \$.75 student Paratransit: \$1.50 general \$1.20 disabled/senior \$1.50 student Commuter bus: \$2.50 to \$4.00 depending on distance. Vanpool fares vary depending on distance.
Tahoe Area Regional Transit	Fixed route Paratransit	Tahoe Basin from Incline Village to Emerald Bay, Truckee, SR 89	\$1.00 general \$.80 disabled/senior
Auburn Transit	Deviated fixed route	City of Auburn	\$.80 general \$.60 disabled/senior \$.60 student
Lincoln Transit	Deviated fixed route	City of Lincoln	\$1.00 general \$.75 disabled/senior \$.75 student Paratransit: \$2.00 general
Roseville Transit	Fixed route Commuter Paratransit	City of Roseville	Fixed route: \$1.00 general \$.50 disabled/senior \$.50 student Commuter: \$2.50 resident \$3.50 non-resident Paratransit: \$3.00 general \$1.50 disabled/senior \$3.00 student
Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA)	Paratransit	Western Placer County	Fares vary based on distance traveled.

Source: Draft Placer County Regional Transportation Plan - 2022

## **Rail**

The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) contracts with Amtrak to operate daily intercity passenger service between San Jose and Auburn. The CCJPA is comprised of six transportation agencies in the Capitol Corridor service area. The Capitol Corridor service began in December 1991 with three daily round trip trains between San Jose and Sacramento and currently provides nine daily round trips. In Placer County, the Capitol Corridor trains stop in Roseville, Rocklin, and Auburn. Connecting bus service is provided to and from Colfax, Nevada City/Grass Valley, Carson City, and Reno. Connector buses provide service from Sacramento to Placer County stations.

The California Zephyr, which runs daily between Chicago and Oakland, provides interstate passenger rail service with stops in Placer County at Colfax, Auburn, Rocklin, and Roseville.

Sacramento Regional Transit conducted a multi-corridor rail study in 2000/01 and also concluded that a regional rail alternative between Auburn and Davis, rather than light rail, would be feasible and cost effective. At the same time, the UPRR is in the midst of conducting a capacity analysis for the corridor. The idea of regional rail service between Auburn and Davis is being incorporated in this analysis to determine whether capacity will exist to provide frequent peak hour service. The Placer County RTP includes the implementation of regional rail service between Auburn and Davis. If implemented, regional rail would be developed in coordination with the intercity rail service and would operate in the UPRR right-of-way.

## **Aviation**

Air transportation from Placer County is available for private or charter aircraft at three airports within Placer County: Auburn Municipal Airport, Blue Canyon Airport, and Lincoln Regional Airport. These airports are general aviation airports, capable of handling aircraft for intrastate, transcontinental and coastal flights. Heavy air freight is not available at public airports within the county.

Sacramento International and Reno are the nearest airports offering complete passenger and freight services on major commercial carriers.

## **Pedestrian, Bicycle and Non-Motorized Transportation**

The development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in Placer County has been a priority of the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency over the last several years. The jurisdictions have adopted policies and goals which encourage the development and use of pedestrian paths and bikeways. In 1988, the Placer County Bikeways Master Plan was adopted and provided a ten-year policy guide for locations and types of bikeways, including financial analysis, for the western slope of Placer County. In 2001, the Bikeways Master Plan was supplemented with an

updated Regional Bikeway Plan. The overall goal of the plan is to promote safe, convenient and enjoyable cycling by establishing a comprehensive system of bikeways that link the communities of Placer County. Segments of bicycle facilities in western Placer County have been funded in part by Transportation Development Act funds.

### **Goods Movement**

Freight and goods are moved by rail, air, truck, pipelines and transmission lines, or by an intermodal combination of these modes.

#### **Rail**

Rail freight service in Placer County is provided by the Union Pacific Transportation Company. Roseville is the site of a major Union Pacific Rail yard. The Roseville yard serves as a major switching center as eastbound railcars and locomotives are organized for the substantial climb over the Sierra, and westbound railcars are redistributed for delivery to West Coast destinations.

#### **Air**

United Parcel Service (UPS) currently makes two flights per day out of the Lincoln Regional Airport. Regularly scheduled air cargo information is not available for Auburn Municipal Airport. Air cargo service is not feasible at Blue Canyon because runway dimensions will not accommodate cargo planes.

#### **Truck**

The majority of goods movement in Placer County is provided by truck transportation. Placer County has considerable long-distance trucking activity because of the presence of I-80. Major truck freight service is available through Auburn. A number of small or independent carriers exist throughout the county and the region.

#### **Pipelines and Transmission Lines**

Placer County is served by a number of public and private entities whose purpose is to provide power, telecommunications, and natural gas throughout the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county. These transmission facilities provide an element of infrastructure which is vital to economic development and growth within Placer County and beyond. They also provide critical energy and communication services to commercial and residential areas.

## **Transportation Systems Management**

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) encompasses a broad range of techniques and measures implemented to maximize the efficiency of the existing transportation system by reducing dependence on single occupant vehicles. TSM techniques are generally low-cost measures to reduce travel or increase the efficiency of existing transportation facilities. In Placer County, TSM measures include public transit services and ridesharing programs. Ridesharing programs include vanpooling, trip reduction ordinances, and park-and-ride lots. To date, each jurisdiction has adopted a trip reduction ordinance.

Caltrans, Placer County, and the incorporated cities operate park-and-ride lots within the county to encourage ridesharing. These lots contain over 600 spaces. The purpose of these lots is to provide a central meeting place adjacent to major travel routes where commuters can congregate and form carpools for the remainder of the trip. Results of a usage survey indicate that lot utilization varies dramatically from little or no usage to overflow usage.

In addition to the park-and-ride lots, Placer County subsidizes nine commuter vanpools that provide an alternative to driving alone.

## **Parking**

Parking requirements within Placer County vary according to the local zoning and jurisdictional requirements. Automobile usage is encouraged with available and convenient parking at home and at work. Therefore, parking availability, through restriction of available parking, is an important consideration in TSM programs.

## **Ongoing Regional Studies**

### **SR 49 Corridor Study**

The SR 49 Corridor Study is a joint effort of PCTPA and Nevada County Transportation Commission (NCTC). A traffic model was developed to evaluate a number of alternatives for their effectiveness in addressing the congestion problems on SR 49. The information derived, together with input solicited from a comprehensive outreach program, will assist the PCTPA and NCTC to determine a corridor strategy for SR 49.

### **Intelligent Transportation Systems Study**

The Intelligent Transportation System Study is a multi-county effort, administered by PCTPA, to develop an ITS Strategic Deployment Plan (SDP) for Placer, El Dorado, Nevada and Sierra Counties. The SDP will examine the application and determine the effectiveness of ITS technology in the four rural counties.

## IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines and for the purpose of this analysis, transportation and traffic impacts are considered significant if one or more of the following conditions would result from implementation of the proposed Placer County RTP.

- Residual service or facility needs not addressed by the RTP capital improvement plan.
- Levels of service in excess of each jurisdiction's adopted standards for any intersection or on any roadway segment.
- Levels of service in excess of transit standards.
- Routing Standards:
  - Within one mile in either direction of the centerline of I-80 between Auburn and Roseville.
  - Within one-half mile in either direction of the centerline of State Routes 49, 65, and 28/89.

### Frequency Standards:

- A maximum of 60-minute headways (service wait time) during peak commute periods along the I-80 corridor.
- A maximum of 60-minute headways between 6:30 AM and 6:30 PM along the SR 28 and SR 89 corridors.
- A minimum of one run during the AM peak period and one run during the PM peak period along the SR 49 and SR 65 corridors.

### Coordination Standards:

- The Transit Operators Working Group shall continue to meet on a regular basis.
- Conflicting standards, goals, policies and/or regulations relating to transportation, circulation, and parking.

### Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Impact 4.7-1: Implementation of the proposed Placer County RTP would generally result in improved transportation and circulation opportunities. This is considered a beneficial impact.**

The major street and highway system serving Placer County is, for the most part, adequately serving existing traffic demand. Noticeable exceptions to this include: Sierra College Boulevard from Old Auburn Road to Douglas Boulevard; Auburn/Folsom Road from the County line to Douglas Boulevard; Sunrise Avenue from Cirby Way to Douglas Boulevard; SR 49 from Interstate 80 to Bell Road; I-80 between Riverside Avenue and Atlantic Street; and SR 65 through downtown Lincoln.<sup>3</sup>

In summary, the following transit improvements will be needed to keep pace with population and employment growth projected in the RTP:

- Improved paratransit services
- Increased frequency of service
- Improved travel times
- Additional bus shelters
- Extended days and hours of service
- Improved service to the disabled and persons of low income
- Expanded service to major destinations such as Sierra College
- Increased commuter service to Sacramento

General aviation needs are discussed in the Placer County RTP, as follows:

- Improvement of the general aviation airports in Auburn and Lincoln
- Advanced technological equipment
- Additional aircraft parking and tiedown areas
- Replacement of aging equipment
- Improving daily operations
- Runway widening and lengthening
- Taxiway and approach runway lighting
- Instrument landing systems
- Control towers
- Fire fighting equipment
- Improved terminal facilities

Pedestrian, bicycle and non-motorized transportation needs are discussed, as follows:

- Safe and efficient facilities to handle current and long-range increases in bicycle usage
- Bicycle facilities in developing areas
- Intercity facilities

TSM improvements are discussed as follows:

- Implement TSM programs for further reductions in VMT, as the county population grows

### Mitigation Measures

The RTP includes a comprehensive program of planned capital improvements and regulatory actions to alleviate identified deficiencies. These are described in the Action Element and the Policy Element of the draft RTP. One new project included in the proposed Placer County RTP is the Placer Parkway, a new transportation

facility that would connect the Lincoln/Roseville/Rocklin area at SR 65 in the east with Sutter County and the Sacramento International Airport at SR 70/99 in the west. Other major projects are consistent with the previous RTP and, as in the previous RTP, many of the construction and maintenance projects are included. These local projects are included in order to develop cost estimates for all transportation projects.

**Impact 4.7-2: Implementation of the proposed Placer County RTP, including the capital improvements and action elements, may not resolve LOS deficiencies on several roadway segments by the year 2005. This is considered to be a potentially significant and unavoidable impact.**

#### Mitigation Measures

4.7-2 *The jurisdictions shall continuously monitor and model the transportation network in order to evaluate LOS deficiencies.*

The land use analysis will only be effective if 1) both the land use database and travel model's network are kept up-to-date; 2) the travel model is refined and improved over time; and 3) sufficient analysis of mitigation measures, particularly TSM and mode choice alternatives, are addressed. Tracking development within the county is crucial to this process and could be enhanced with a computerized geographical information system (GIS).

Other measures may become available for implementation via the Air Quality Attainment Plan; however, their feasibility and effectiveness remain speculative. Therefore, this impact remains *potentially significant and unavoidable*.

**Impact 4.7-3: Implementation of the proposed Placer County RTP capital improvements and regulatory actions may not resolve identified deficiencies in the areas of public transportation; aviation; non-motorized; and transportation systems management. This is considered to be a potentially significant and unavoidable impact.**

#### Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following mitigation measure will reduce this impact, but it remains potentially significant and unavoidable.

4.7-3(a) *The ongoing update of the jurisdictions' general plans and community plans, in addition to future plan revisions, shall fully integrate the adopted programs, policies, and improvements of the RTP, as appropriate.*

In addition, the following measure related to pedestrian and non-motorized transportation facilities is required.

- 4.7-3(b) *In conjunction with updating local general plans, the jurisdictions should consider the development of programs and design standards to facilitate viable pedestrian and non-motorized travel.*

## ENDNOTES

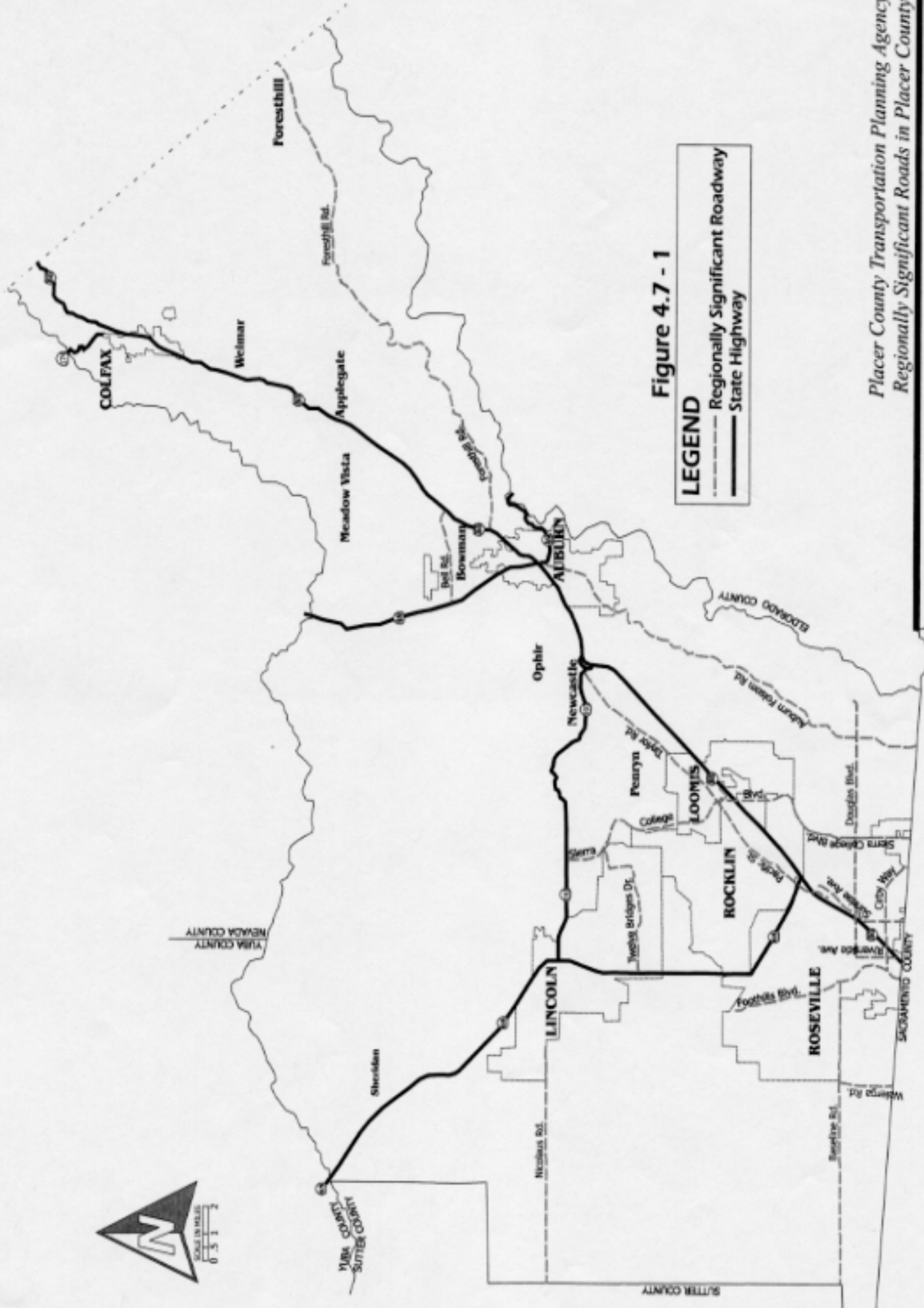
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<sup>1</sup> California Department of Motor Vehicles

California Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit

<sup>2</sup> United States Environmental Protection Agency

<sup>3</sup> SACOG SACMET Model and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency, Regional Transportation Plan, Final Environmental Impact Report, July 23, 1997.



**Figure 4.7 - 1**

**LEGEND**  
 - - - Regionally Significant Roadway  
 — State Highway