

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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This document is the Placer County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) - 2022 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended. The Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) is the “lead agency” for the project evaluated in this EIR and as such has the principal responsibility for approving the project.

The PCTPA is updating the RTP in accordance with the RTP Guidelines revised by the California Transportation Commission in December, 1999 and pursuant to Government Code Section 14522. The updated RTP includes a re-drafted Policy Element, Action Element, Financial Element, and Air Quality Element, with both a short term (10 year) and a long term (20 year) time horizon, and is based on updated population, employment, and housing forecasts.

## **Nature and Background of Project Under Review**

This EIR has been prepared to evaluate the environmental impacts of the implementation of the proposed RTP 2022. The RTP is intended to guide transportation planning and improvements within Placer County over a 20-year period. It applies to the entire western slope of Placer County, excluding those portions of the county within the Tahoe Basin which are governed by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). The project under review is described in greater detail in Chapter 2, Project Description.

## **Purpose and Scope of a Program EIR**

The Placer County RTP EIR is a Program EIR. A Program EIR is an informational document designed to provide a basis for the local planning and decision making process. A Program EIR assesses the impacts of a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related in one of four ways described in Section 15168(a) of CEQA:

- Geographically,
- As logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions,
- In connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans, or other general criteria to govern the conduct of a continuing program, or

- As individual activities carried out under the same authorizing statutory or regulatory authority and having generally similar environmental effects which can be mitigated in similar ways.

The EIR is intended to provide a cumulative analysis of potential impacts that will result from implementation of the RTP, and to provide a basis for evaluating future transportation improvement projects. Future individual transportation improvement projects will be subject to site-specific environmental review when proposed for construction, but such review will be focused on site-specific issues not addressed in this EIR. This process is defined as “tiering” and refers to the examination of broad issues in a Program EIR with subsequent focused environmental review concentrating on site-specific issues and incorporating by reference broad discussions in the Program EIR.

Pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines, the scope of this final EIR includes specific issues and concerns identified in the Notice of Preparation (NOP) by PCTPA as potentially significant, as well as those identified in the responses to the NOP of the EIR circulated by the State Clearinghouse and PCTPA. An Initial Study and NOP were prepared and circulated for a 30-day period of public review and comment on May 11, 2001. There were two responses to the NOP.

Upon completion of the Initial Study and NOP, it was determined that analysis in several issue areas would be remote and speculative at this time. These areas are: Cultural Resources; Geology/Soils; Hazards & Hazardous Materials; Hydrology/Water Quality; Mineral Resources; Noise; Public Services; Recreation; and Utilities/Service Systems. The analytical results related to each of these issue areas was found to be highly dependent upon project and site-specific information and characteristics. Consequently, evaluation of these issues is more appropriate to a project level, than a program level, environmental analysis.

Section 15145 of the CEQA Guidelines states that where a Lead Agency finds particular impacts to be too speculative for evaluation, the agency is to note its conclusion and terminate the discussion. For the issues noted above, future environmental analysis required of each individual project will address these concerns at a project-specific level. Therefore, PCTPA has determined that further analysis at this time is not warranted.

### **Organization of the EIR**

This report includes the following principal parts: Introduction; Project Description; Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures; Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures; CEQA Considerations; Alternatives Analysis; and Appendices.

The Introduction (Chapter 1) provides a general overview describing the intended use of the EIR and the review and certification process.

The Project Description (Chapter 2) provides a detailed description of the proposed project, including a discussion of the County's regional location and the components of the proposed RTP. This chapter also discusses background information, major objectives, and characteristics of the proposed RTP.

The Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures (Chapter 3) presents an overview of the results and conclusions of the evaluation. This section summarizes environmental impacts that would result from project implementation, describes available mitigation measures, and indicates the level of significance of impacts after mitigation.

The Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures section (Chapter 4) contains a project-specific analysis of environmental issue areas related to implementation of the project. The subsection for each environmental issue contains an introduction and description of the setting of the project site, identifies impacts that would or could occur, and recommends appropriate mitigation measures.

The CEQA Considerations section (Chapter 5) provides a discussion of issues required by CEQA regarding impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, including: potential growth-inducing impacts; cumulative impacts; and significant irreversible effects.

The Alternatives Analysis (Chapter 6) describes the alternatives to the proposed project and includes an analysis of their associated environmental effects.

The Appendices include technical data relevant to the review and understanding of the project.