

3.4 Aviation

Aviation facilities in Placer County include both public and private airports and helipads serving commercial, recreational, medical, law enforcement, fire and agricultural needs. There are three general purpose airports: Auburn Municipal Airport, Blue Canyon Airport, and Lincoln Regional Airport. In addition, there are several private use airports and helipads in the county. There are no commercial service airports or military airports in Placer County. Refer to Figures 3.4a and 3.4b.

The Truckee-Tahoe Airport is located near the northeastern edge of the County. Most of the airport lies in Nevada County; therefore, the airport is included in the Nevada County Regional Transportation Plan.

AVIATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Auburn Municipal Airport

Auburn Municipal Airport is owned and operated by the City of Auburn. The regional general aviation facility is located approximately four miles north of downtown Auburn. It serves as the aviation hub for the greater Auburn area and portions of eastern Placer County. The 295-acre airport and adjacent industrial park are surrounded by unincorporated areas of Placer County. Primary airport access is from Bell Road, via New Airport Road. State Route 49 is approximately one mile to the west. Interstate 80 is approximately two miles to the east.

The City of Auburn reports that in Fiscal Year 2003/2004, there were 210 based aircraft. This total is expected to increase to 240 by 2015 (Airport Master Plan – 1996). Runway operations are projected to be over 80,000 by 2015. Growth is to occur in all categories of aircraft – single- and twin-engine, turboprops, small business jets, and helicopters.

The airport's elevation is 1,531 feet above sea level. The runway is 3,700 feet long by 75 feet wide. There is a 30-foot wide parallel taxiway. A 40-foot by 40-foot public helipad and fueling area accommodate based and transient rotor craft. The airport has a non-precision instrument approach to Runway 7.

Meeting projected aviation demand will require both the addition of new facilities and the reconstruction of existing ones. Planned improvements include runway lengthening, aircraft parking apron, hangar storage, and an operations/administration building. See Table 3.4-1 for a list of projects (Capital Improvement Program).

See 2003 Capital Improvement Plan – California Aviation Systems Plan (CASP) for a complete list of Placer County Airport projects (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/aeronautics>).

Table 3.4-1
Aviation Capital Improvement Plan

Airport	Project Description	Cost	PRIMARY FUNDING REQUESTED			
			FAA	State	Local	Year
Auburn	T-hangar TWs	\$212,800	x			2005
	Update Master Plan	\$150,000	x			2005
	Service Road -- Old Airport Rd. to East Apron	\$375,000	x			2005
	Electronic Security	\$75,000	x			2005
	Terminal Building -- 5,000 SF	\$750,000	x			2007
	Environmental Report	\$150,000	x			2007
	North Side Access Road	\$500,000	x			2007
	North Side Apron & Taxiway	\$750,000	x			2007
Blue Canyon	Runway/Parking Ramp Resurfacing	\$52,000		x		2004
Lincoln	Land Acquisition	\$200,000		x	x	2005
	Extend Drainage Culverts	\$300,000	x	x	x	2005
	o Relocate Headwalls					
	o Runway 15/33 Safety Area					
	Biological Planning Study	\$165,000	x	x	x	2005
	Arrival/Departure Building	\$1,850,000	x	x	x	2005
	o Relocation of Fuel Island/Parking					
	Aircraft Parking Apron	\$2,150,000	x	x	x	2005
	Auxiliary Power Generator	\$150,000	x	x	x	2005
	WS Building Demo & Underground	\$1,355,600	x	x	x	2006
	o Clean-up & Construct Westside					
	o Access Road					
	New Holding Bay/Run-up Pad -- TWK	\$300,000	x	x	x	2006
	Runway Blast Pads	\$500,000	x	x	x	2006
	Larger Turning Radii	\$200,000	x	x	x	2006
	Overlay RW 15/33 & All Taxiways	\$3,100,000	x	x	x	2006
	Construct Westside Infrastructure	\$2,200,000	x	x	x	2007
	Construct Westside Taxiways (B, C, E, G, J & K)	\$3,000,000	x	x	x	2007
	Airport Parking Lot -- Phase 2	\$500,000	x	x	x	2008
	Airport Paving Slurry Seal	\$400,000	x	x	x	2008
Parallel Runway	\$3,000,000	x	x	x	2009	
Air Traffic Control Tower	\$6,000,000	x	x	x	2009	

Figure 3.4a
Airport Locations Map – Western County

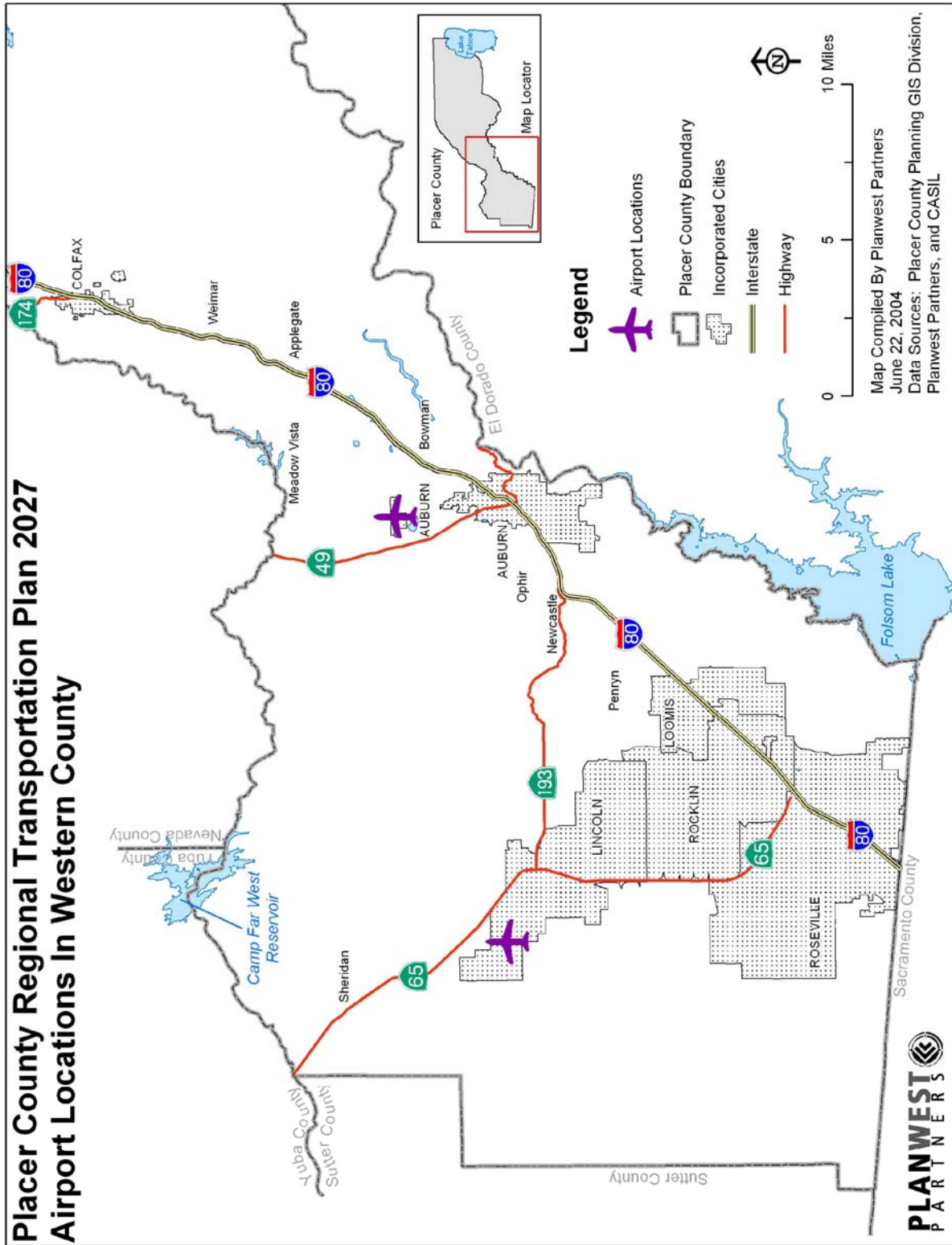
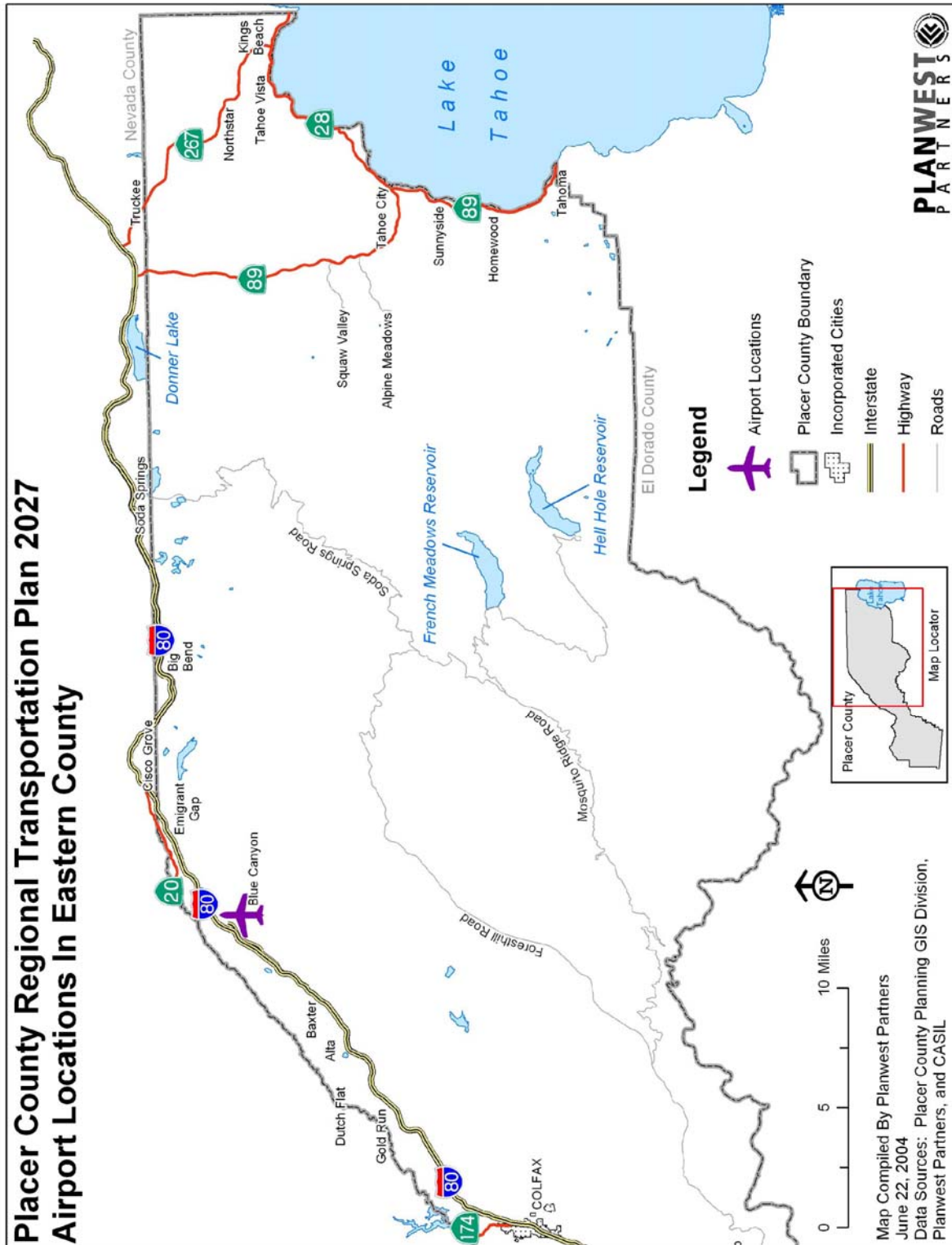


Figure 3.4b
Airport Locations Map – Eastern County



Blue Canyon Airport

The Blue Canyon Airport serves as an important emergency landing field along the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. The limited use airport is owned by the U.S. Forest Service and Placer County, and is operated by Placer County under a special use permit. Located midway between Auburn and Truckee, . Airport access is from Interstate 80's Blue Canyon exit.

The airport is open to public use, although traffic is minimal. The primary constraint is weather. Snow and ice conditions close the airport for about three months per year. An ongoing issue at Blue Canyon is the need for tree and brush removal to comply with FAA and Caltrans Division of Aeronautics safety regulations.

The airport's elevation is 5,284 feet above sea level. The runway is 3,300 feet long by 50 feet wide. An airport layout plan was prepared in 1999.

Table 3.4-1 lists the airport's planned improvement project. See 2003 Capital Improvement Plan – California Aviation Systems Plan (CASP) for a complete list of Placer County Airport projects (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/aeronautics>).

Lincoln Regional Airport

The Lincoln Municipal Airport, a regional general aviation facility, is operated by the City of Lincoln. It is located on the western edge of the City, north of Nicolaus Road. Due to its close proximity to major industrial and population centers in the South Placer region along State Route 65 and Interstate 80, the Lincoln Regional Airport has become an attractive alternative to the Sacramento International Airport, especially for executives of major industries in Roseville and Rocklin.

The City of Lincoln reports that in Fiscal Year 2003/2004, there were 202 based aircraft, including 180 single engine, 15 multi-engine, 2 turbo-props, and 5 turbo jets. The total number of operations in Fiscal Year 2003/2004 was 80,000. Future projections, according to the City of Lincoln, are for 100,000 operations per year and 250 based aircraft in 2010.

The airport's elevation is 118 feet above sea level. The runway is 6,100 feet long by 100 feet wide. There is a full-length parallel taxiway. The installation and commissioning of an Instrument Landing System (ILS) in 1994 increased the airport's ability to accommodate larger corporate aircraft. Currently, the airport can accommodate up to a Boeing Business Jet (BBJ). The Master Plan includes runway lengthening/strengthening to accommodate even larger aircraft.

Growth at Lincoln Regional Airport has been primarily on the east side along Flightline Drive. An access road on the west side is scheduled for construction in 2006 and is included in the Lincoln Regional Airport's – Airport Capital Project list. See Table 3.4-1 for a list of projects.

See 2003 Capital Improvement Plan – California Aviation Systems Plan (CASP) for a complete list of Placer County Airport projects (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/aeronautics>).

AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION

An Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) was first established for Placer County in 1985. Initially, the Sierra Planning Organization¹ functioned as the ALUC. At the urging of Placer County and the cities of Auburn and Lincoln, PCTPA assumed the ALUC responsibility in 1997. The desire for greater local control over airport land use planning matters was the principal factor for the change.

The purpose of an ALUC is to promote land use compatibility around airports. The California Public Utilities Code governs ALUC responsibilities and powers. The statutes give ALUCs two principal powers to accomplish this objective. ALUCs must:

- Prepare and adopt an airport land use plan; and,
- Review the plans, regulations, and other actions of local agencies and airport operators for consistency with the plan.

The Placer County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan was adopted in 2000. This plan is primarily concerned with land uses near the three public-use airports: Auburn Municipal Airport, Blue Canyon Airport, and Lincoln Regional Airport. Plan implementation requires coordination with Placer County, Auburn, Lincoln, and for the Blue Canyon Airport, Nevada County and the U.S. Forest Service. The plan details land use compatibility criteria and review processes for airport master plans, new airports/heliports, local agency planning and building regulations, and development proposals.

State law requires that a local agency's general plan and supporting planning documents are to be consistent with the compatibility plan. Alternatively, a local agency may adopt findings and override an ALUC determination of inconsistency. At this time, Auburn, Lincoln, and Placer County have not submitted general plan consistency determinations for their general plans. Each agency refers proposed plan/regulation amendments and development projects for land within an airport influence area to the Commission for review.

Placer County has some of the fastest growing communities in California. New urban development is proposed to the south and west of Lincoln Regional Airport. New retail and 'big-box' commercial development proposals are being considered by Placer County along SR 49 (Grass Valley Highway) in north Auburn. Ensuring airport compatibility for new and redeveloping areas around Auburn Municipal and Lincoln Regional Airports will be a critical ALUC role.

¹ A council of governments and economic development agency consisting of El Dorado, Nevada, Placer, and Sierra Counties and most of the cities in them.

AVIATION COORDINATION

The California Aviation System Plan (CASP), prepared by the California Department of Transportation – Aeronautics Division, is the forum for continuous aviation system planning, and guides the future development and preservation of the state-wide system of airports and aviation facilities. It is made up of elements such as background and introduction, air transportation issues, regional and state plans, and capital improvement plan/program. The CASP is updated every five years in consultation with Regional Transportation Planning Agencies, and it is adopted by the California Transportation Commission. PCTPA staff participates on the Aviation System Planning Committee.

The CASP's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Element was updated in 2003 (see <http://www.dot.ca.gov/aeronautics>). This element consists of desired projects for the 10-year period beginning in 2004. The projects are based on applications submitted by airports, via PCTPA, to the Division of Aeronautics. The CIP is updated every two years; Table 3.4-1 lists the planned improvements submitted by each airport manager for the RTP update.

The CASP's System Requirements Element (SRE) was updated in 2004. This element identifies and prioritizes needed airport capacity and safety-related infrastructure enhancements identified by the Division of Aeronautics. Starting in 2004, it is to be updated every two years to match CIP updates. The SRE includes a list of potential projects needed to optimize the capacity and safety of California's system of airports – a consideration outside the responsibility of individual airports.

The CASP's Policy Element was updated in 2001. This element lists policies and implementation actions to guide CASP development and improve California's aviation system. The RTP is consistent with applicable Policy Element provisions for noise, safety, land use compatibility; environmental coordination; CIP needs assessment, and funding. The RTP includes new policies to promote airport ground access and airport security.

AVIATION ACTION PLAN

Short Range

1. Continue efforts to avoid conflicts over noise issues. (*PCTPA, jurisdictions, airport operators, vicinity property owners*)
2. Continue to protect airspace and runway approaches. (*PCTPA, FAA, jurisdictions, airport operator, vicinity property owners*)
3. Continue to upgrade navigational equipment as needed. (*Jurisdictions, airport operators*)

4. Promote public awareness of airport services and benefits. (*PCTPA, jurisdictions, airport operators*)
5. Maintain and improve existing airport facilities in accordance with airport master plans. (*Jurisdictions, airport operators*)
6. Assist operators of public use airports in pursuing funding sources. (*PCTPA, airport operators*)
7. Explore opportunities to improve passenger and cargo airport ground access. (*PCTPA, jurisdictions*)
8. Promote the development of general aviation airport security for functional areas such as personnel, aircraft, airports/facilities, surveillance, security plans and communications, and specialty operations. (*Caltrans Division of Aeronautics, jurisdictions*)

Long Range

1. Continue to implement the actions outlined in the short range action plan. (*PCTPA, jurisdictions, airport operators*)

AVIATION PROJECTS

See Table 3.4-1 Aviation Capital Improvement Program.