

2.1 Setting

Placerville is located in El Dorado County on the western slope of the Central Sierra Nevada at the junction of US 50 and State Highway 49. Situated approximately midway between Sacramento and Lake Tahoe, Placerville lies about 25 miles east of Folsom. The elevation in the City is 1,866 feet above sea level. Within the native lands of the ancient Maidu Indians, the City is a historic mining town with a population (in the year 2000) of 9,610. The closely-knit City is characterized by narrow roadways, historic buildings, hills, ravines and US 50, which runs directly through the center of the City.

2.2 Study Area

The study area of the NMTP includes the entire City limits of Placerville. As the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for El Dorado County, EDCTC has prepared the NMTP for the City of Placerville.

2.3 Land Use & Activity Centers








For the purpose of this planning document, land uses within the City will be analyzed to help determine needs for non-motorized travel. The City occupies approximately six square miles at the bottom and up the slopes of a ravine bisected by Hangtown Creek and US 50. The majority of the City's various land uses are within a reasonable distance for bicycling.

Listed below are some of the major activity center destinations and land uses in and around the City:

- The agricultural region of Apple Hill
- US 50, the major transportation corridor through Placerville
- Folsom Lake College near Placerville
- El Dorado County Fairgrounds
- El Dorado County Government Center
- El Dorado County Courthouse on Main Street
- Shopping and retail district on Placerville Drive
- Shopping and retail district on Broadway
- Historic shopping district on Main Street
- Marshall Medical Center
- Schools
- City Parks/Benham Park & Aquatic Center

The City has two primary areas of retail shopping, the downtown Main Street/Broadway area, and the Placerville Drive/Forni Road area. The City of Placerville currently lacks a safe and direct bicycle facility between the two activity centers. Bike lanes along US 50 between Canal Street and Placerville Drive serve as the primary existing connection between the two activity centers. The bike lanes along the Highway are less than ideal for bicycle travel as high car speeds and traffic volumes are common in this area.

The bicycle transportation component of this document complies with Caltrans Streets and Highways Code, Section 891, Sections A-K. One of the requirements is to show land uses on the maps to demonstrate transportation connections on proposed bike routes. Maps 3 and 4 in Chapter 5 include a set of symbols to indicate areas of land use. Land uses indicated on the maps include; Schools, shopping centers, employment centers, bicycle parking facilities, government centers, park and ride lots and parks, as follows:

	School
	Shopping Center
	Employment Center
	Bicycle Parking
	Government Center
	Park and Ride Lot
	Park

	Historical 1990	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Total El Dorado County	94,674	132,690	147,045	159,421	171,212	184,495	197,875
City of Placerville	8,225	9,610	10,072	11,252	12,440	13,786	15,193
Unincorporated El Dorado County	86,449	123,080	136,974	148,169	158,772	170,709	182,682

Source: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Regional Information Center December 2004. Data does not include the Tahoe Basin.

A review of the population, land use and commute habits in the City is a necessary first step in developing accurate bicycle commuter projections. In 2003, El Dorado County was the tenth fastest growing county in California, with a 6% annual growth rate. Future growth and changes in land use will affect both the bikeway system and the number of potential bicycle commuters. Many new bikeway projects will be constructed as part of new developments and road construction. Construction of new employment centers near the City will change the travel times and distances to work, making bicycling a more attractive commute mode.

As shown in the table above, El Dorado County and the City of Placerville are poised for significant growth in the coming years.

2.4 Bicycle & Pedestrian Commuter Projections

A common term used in analyzing choices people make in transportation is “mode split.” Mode split refers to the transportation option people choose, be it taking a bus, walking, carpooling, driving or bicycling. Mode split is often used to evaluate transportation mode choices, and the trend in the Sacramento region today is to create a more evenly distributed mode split. The census data in the following table shows a 0% choice for bicycling in the City.

Walking, on the other hand was reported to be the primary mode of transportation to work by 3.7% of Placerville residents, while 75% reported they drove alone.

Car, Truck or Van	3,681
Drove Alone	3,042
Public Transportation	64
Bus or Trolley Bus	56
Motorcycle	10
Bicycle	0
Walked	151
Worked at Home	139

Bicycle commute habits are difficult to measure accurately without extensive data collection efforts. The Census records only “Means of Transportation to Work” therefore; trips from home-to-school, to the store, to a friend’s house, and other transportation related trips remain unaccounted for. Additionally, the Census asks specifically for the “primary mode” of transportation to work, so those who bicycle less than 50% of the time, or combine the bicycle with other commute modes, are likely unaccounted for. As a component of a future update of this NMTP, the City could consider developing a citywide non-motorized transportation survey.

The Bike to Work Day event held in the City in 2003 and 2004 determined that there are a number of regular bicycle commuters in the City. The 2003 and 2004 events had nearly 30 participants each, and several of them reported that they commute by bicycle on a regular basis.

Many recent studies document the potential of the bicycle as a transportation mode. A Lou Harris Poll conducted in 1991 found that nearly half (46%) of American adults age 18 or above had bicycled in the past year. Of these;

- 46% stated they would sometimes commute by bicycle if safe bicycle lanes were available
- 53% would if they had safe, separate, designated paths on which to ride
- 45% would if their workplace had showers, lockers, and secure bicycle storage
- 47% would if their employer offered financial or other incentives

Source: National Bicycling and Walking Study, U.S. Dept. Of Transportation

Many factors influence the decision to bicycle including weather and terrain, however studies show that the primary factor is lack of safe facilities. Some retrofitting would be required, but the City has the unique opportunity to integrate the bicycle as a part of the transportation system today as new development occurs.

The 1990 Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey (NPTS) determined that two out of five travel trips are two miles or less, and nearly half are three miles or less. The small, closely-knit City provides a unique opportunity for increased short, local bicycle transportation trips. With improved bicycle facilities, the City could increase the mode split for bicycles and become a “bicycle friendly community.”

Source: National Bicycling and Walking Study, U.S. Dept. Of Transportation

2.5 Regional and Multi-Modal Connections

Due to its central location in El Dorado County, many neighboring communities surround the City. The communities include Camino, Diamond Springs, El Dorado, Pleasant Valley and Coloma. El Dorado Transit serves the City of Placerville and most of those neighboring communities. The major transit centers and bus stops are listed below:

Location	Bike Racks Present	Bike Lockers Present	Other Amenities
Placerville Station, Mosquito Road	Yes	Yes	Restrooms, benches, covered shelter
City Hall Bus Stop, Main Street	No	No	Restrooms nearby
Fairgrounds Park and Ride Lot, Armory Way	No	Yes	None

The El Dorado Transit Commuter Bus to Sacramento is one of the most popular bus services El Dorado Transit provides. The commuter bus stops at two locations in the City, the Placerville Station and the Fairgrounds Park and Ride lot. Access to both of these important multi-modal transit centers was considered in the development of this NMTP.

2.6 Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Bicycle safety and education programs are an important component of any non-motorized transportation system. For both existing and potential users, perceptions about safety directly affect the numbers of potential bicyclists in the City. Bicycle education programs and accident data were reviewed as a component of this plan.

2.6.1 Accident Data

The California Highway Patrol maintains Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) accident data. The data is contained in the "[California Report of Fatal and Injury Motor Vehicle Traffic Collisions](#)." The most recent data available is from 2002, and the El Dorado County portion relating to bicycles and pedestrians is listed below.

Incorporated Cities and type of roadway	Collisions											
	Pedestrian Involved						Bicycle Involved					
	Fatal			Injury			Fatal			Injury		
Year	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002	2000	2001	2002
City of Placerville	0	0	0	5	2	3	0	0	0	1	1	2
South Lake Tahoe	2	1	1	11	11	5	0	0	0	15	20	17
Unincorporated State Highways	0	0	0	10	4	1	0	0	0	5	1	5
County Roadways	0	1	0	8	10	8	1	0	0	8	11	7
County Total	2	2	1	34	27	17	1	0	0	29	33	31

2.6.2 Safety/Education Programs

The City has conducted Bike Rodeo's in the past at the Kids Expo, which is held annually at the El Dorado County Fairgrounds. The Kids Expo Bike Rodeo was held in partnership with State Farm Insurance Company, which provided materials such as safety cones and registration cards for the participants.

The Bike Rodeo included the following activities:

- Mechanical bike checks by a local bicycle shop
- A riding skills event
- Helmet fit check

In 2004, a Placerville apartment manager worked with the California Highway Patrol and the City to conduct a Bike Rodeo at his apartment complex.

Neither the City nor the County has an existing brochure for bicycle and pedestrian safety. There is a bicycle safety coloring book that is offered by the police department at events like the annual County Fair and Kids Expo.

Recommendation: *Develop an educational non-motorized safety brochure targeted at children.*

Special events such as "Bike to Work Day" and "Walk to School Day" encourage people to try bicycle commuting or walking to school. The first Bike to Work Day event was held in the City in 2003. Both the 2003 and 2004 events had nearly 30 participants stop by the location in downtown Placerville for refreshments, bicycle products, information and educational resources.

Placerville's first Walk to School Day was held in October of 2004. Several community members and community officials participated. Over 150 children walked to Sierra School from two locations in downtown Placerville. The event helped encourage children to walk to school and created awareness of the condition of sidewalk and crosswalk facilities in the City near Sierra School.

