

CHAPTER 3: PHYSICAL SETTING

To set the framework in which the current and future transportation systems of El Dorado County function, a complete characterization of the area is needed. Information included in this section describes the location, population, and demographics of the county, as well as projections for the future population.

LOCATION

El Dorado County is located in the foothills and mountains of the Sierra Nevada, extending eastward from the eastern portion of California's Central Valley. The western portion of El Dorado County is characterized by rolling foothills, increasing in elevation to the east. The county is bordered by Placer County to the north, Amador County to the south, Sacramento County to the west and the State of Nevada to the east. A portion of Lake Tahoe is located in El Dorado County. In total, El Dorado County contains 1,805 square miles ranging in elevation from 200 feet above sea level to 10,881 feet above sea level at the highest mountain peak.

There are two incorporated cities in El Dorado County: Placerville, the County seat; and South Lake Tahoe, which is within the jurisdiction the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). Numerous unincorporated communities dot El Dorado County. These include El Dorado Hills, Cameron Park, Shingle Springs, El Dorado, Diamond Springs, Latrobe, Fairplay, Somerset, Grizzly Flat, Camino, Pollock Pines, Coloma/Lotus, Garden Valley, Georgetown, Rescue, Mt. Aukum, Pleasant Valley, Kyburz, Strawberry, and Cool. Figure 3-1 shows the location of El Dorado County in California, Figure 3-2 shows the location of communities within El Dorado County.

CLIMATE

The weather in El Dorado County varies greatly depending on the elevation from warm dry summers and mild winters in El Dorado Hills and Placerville to cool summers and snowy winters in South Lake Tahoe. Typically, temperatures in the lower elevations are higher in summer and winter, while mountain temperatures are lower. The rainy season in El Dorado County occurs between November and April, but excessive rainfall and damaging winter storms are rare. The Sierra Nevada snowfields are a major source of water for the region during the dry summer months as the snowmelt is captured in reservoirs along the western slope.

**TABLE 3-1
TEMPERATURE AND PRECIPITATION IN EL DORADO COUNTY**

Area	Average Temperature	Average Maximum Temperature	Average Minimum Temperature	Average Total Precipitation
Placerville	57.2	71.1	43.3	38.39
Georgetown	57.2	69	45.5	51.86
Tahoe	43.3	56.1	30.6	31.73

Source: Western Regional Climate Center, <http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/summary/climsmnca.html>, Mar. 2004

FIGURE 3 - 1

MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF EL DORADO COUNTY IN CALIFORNIA



FIGURE 3 - 2

MAP SHOWING WESTERN EL DORADO COMMUNITIES AND THE CITY OF PLACERVILLE

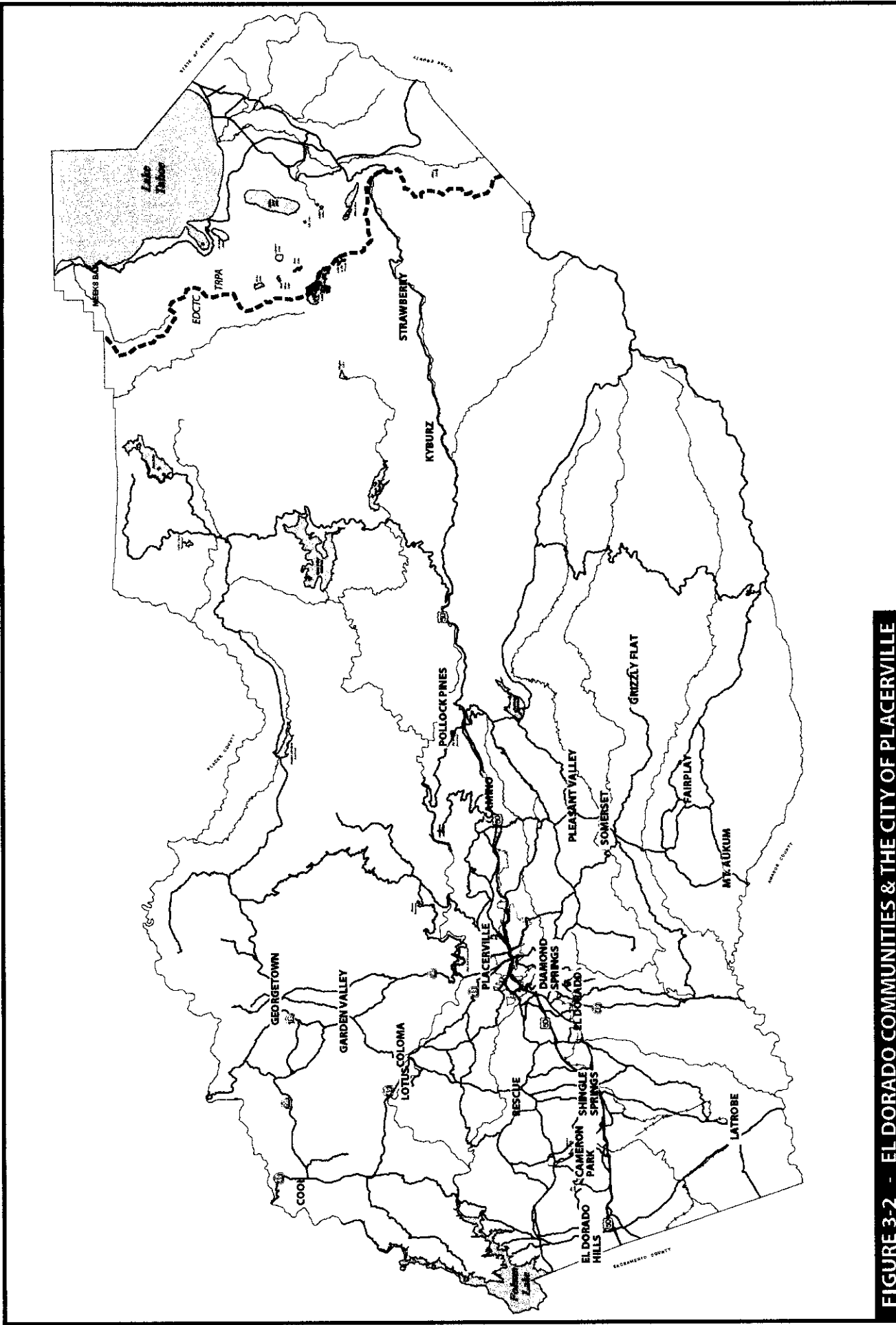
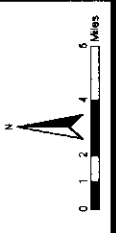


FIGURE 3-2 - EL DORADO COMMUNITIES & THE CITY OF PLACERVILLE



EDCTC/Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Boundary Line - - - - -



CHARACTER

El Dorado County is truly Gold Country; it is where the California Gold Rush took place. From the rolling El Dorado Hills, to the narrow streets of Placerville, all the way up the Pony Express Trail to Lake Tahoe, El Dorado County is rich in history. The Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park in Coloma has a full-scale replica of Sutter's Mill and hosts up to 500,000 visitors annually.

El Dorado County is rich in agriculture. The orchards of Apple Hill play host to numerous visitors each fall for the apple harvest. The wineries of El Dorado have gained acclaim since 1984, when the County was designated by the federal government as an official wine district appellation with the El Dorado name. In 2001, the sub-region of Fairplay was given a similar designation.

Of the 1,805 square miles in El Dorado County, over half is in public ownership in the form of national forests and various parks and recreational areas. The acres of public land combined with privately owned timberlands, parks, campgrounds, orchards, wineries and recreational facilities create an atmosphere of open space for which the County is well known. The climate, geography, agriculture, and historical richness of El Dorado County make it a highly acclaimed recreation destination and an outstanding place to live.

GROWTH ASSUMPTIONS

INTRODUCTION

As the Regional Information Center for the Sacramento area, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) has prepared and adopted population and employment forecasts for the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. The population and employment forecasts reflect the growth that is anticipated to occur within El Dorado County during the twenty-year horizon of this plan. SACOG developed the population and employment forecasts in consultation with the local jurisdictions and the 2000 Census.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The population forecasts included in the Regional Transportation Plan were developed by SACOG. Population forecasts are identified at five-year intervals as shown in Table 3-2. Included for comparison purposes is the historical 1990 and 2000 data for each jurisdiction.

**TABLE 3-2: POPULATION PROJECTIONS BY JURISDICTION: 2000 – 2025
EL DORADO COUNTY (EXCLUDING THE TAHOE BASIN)**

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>Historical 1990</u>	<u>Historical 2000</u>
Total El Dorado County	147,046	159,421	171,212	184,495	197,875	94,674	132,690
City of Placerville	10,072	11,252	12,440	13,786	15,193	8,225	9,610
Unincorporated El Dorado County	136,974	148,169	158,772	170,709	182,682	86,449	123,080

Source: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Regional Information Center, December 2004.

Note: Data have been reconciled with the 2000 census.

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The employment forecasts included in the Regional Transportation Plan were derived from the expected increase in building square footage or acreage factor consistent with each local general plan. SACOG converted the building square footage or acreage factor into employment using calculated holding capacities consistent with those assumed for the local general plans. Employment forecasts are identified at five-year intervals as shown in Table 3-3. Included for comparison purposes is the historical 1990 and 2000 data for each jurisdiction.

**TABLE 3-3: EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS BY JURISDICTION: 2000 – 2025
EL DORADO COUNTY (EXCLUDING THE TAHOE BASIN)**

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>Historical 1990</u>	<u>Historical 2000</u>
Total El Dorado County	51,643	58,266	61,988	63,830	69,669	21,804	35,695
City of Placerville	13,402	14,429	14,521	14,539	14,446	6,704	8,790
Unincorporated El Dorado County	38,241	43,837	47,467	51,291	55,223	15,100	26,905

Source: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Regional Information Center, December, 2004.

Note: Data have been reconciled with the 2000 census.

HOUSING PROJECTIONS

The housing forecasts included in the Regional Transportation Plan were developed by SACOG. Housing forecasts are identified at five-year intervals as shown in Table 3-4. Included for comparison purposes is the historical 1990 and 2000 data for each jurisdiction.

**TABLE 3-4: HOUSING UNIT PROJECTIONS BY JURISDICTION: 2000 – 2025
EL DORADO COUNTY (EXCLUDING THE TAHOE BASIN)**

	<u>2005</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2025</u>	<u>Historical 1990</u>	<u>Historical 2000</u>
Total El Dorado County	56,111	59,073	64,526	69,786	78,990	40,180	49,263
City of Placerville	4,292	4,585	5,082	5,577	6,404	3,527	4,242
Unincorporated El Dorado County	51,819	54,488	59,444	64,209	72,586	36,653	45,021

Source: Sacramento Area Council of Governments, Regional Information Center, December, 2004.

Note: Data have been reconciled with the 2000 census.

SUMMARY

El Dorado County's communities, cultural amenities, economic opportunities, and ideal climate continue to attract new residents, workers, and businesses, creating a dynamic environment in which to plan for and implement transportation improvements. To examine how growth has impacted transportation, it is useful to examine trends that unfolded during the decades between 1980 and 2000. Table 3-5 displays some of the key growth indicators shaping travel behavior in El Dorado County.