

# CHAPTER 9: GOODS MOVEMENT

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California's goods movement transportation system is the lifeline of the State's domestic and international trade, moving almost \$640 billion worth of California commodities. Over 800 million tons of freight is moved out of, into, and within the State every year. Goods movement is critical to the continued economic health of the El Dorado region by allowing local producers to transport their goods to market, as well as bringing needed raw materials and finished products into the area for use by local businesses and individuals.

Goods movement covers all transportation methods by which freight and commodities are transported into and out of El Dorado County. In general, the most common methods to transport freight and commodities are rail, truck, air, bus, and pipelines.

## GOODS MOVEMENT EXISTING CONDITIONS

### RAIL TRANSPORT

Currently, El Dorado County has no viable rail transport system. In July 1991, the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor Joint Powers Authority (SPTC-JPA) was formed to purchase the Sacramento-Placerville railroad corridor from Southern Pacific Railway Corporation. The purchase was completed in September 1996 shortly before the merger of Southern Pacific into Union Pacific. The four agencies of the SPTC-JPA are El Dorado County, Sacramento County, Sacramento Regional Transit and the City of Folsom.

In order to preserve the continuity of the corridor, the purchase was made under the protection of Federal law, which encourages state and local agencies and private interests to acquire, use and preserve rail transportation corridors for future re-activation of rail service.

Twenty-eight of the 53 miles of the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor (SPTC) purchased by the SPTC-JPA are within El Dorado County. In February of 2003, a master plan was prepared for the corridor, which identifies multiple uses, including excursion trains, trails, and utility easements. It also identifies related environmental protection and enhancement strategies such as fencing, landscaping, signing, maintenance, vegetation control and other fire prevention/control actions.

Rail transportation has played an important historical role in the development of the county, although currently there are no active rail transportation facilities. However, the former Southern Pacific right-of-way and track within the County, now known as the SPTC, has requirements regarding preservation of the potential for reinstatement of rail transportation capabilities. The former Michigan/California Railroad right-of-way was purchased with state funding that precludes its use for rail unless that funding was returned.

### AIR TRANSPORT

Air transportation is more expensive than ground transportation and is thus not feasible to utilize for low cost bulk products. Air transportation is the preferred method of transport for high value, light weight goods, such as computer components. Air transportation may be feasible for document transportation; however, with advanced technologies such as fax machines and modems, the demand for the transportation of documents will probably decrease.

Mather Airport is the closest main air cargo port to El Dorado County, with a location approximately 15 miles west of the El Dorado County along the US 50 corridor, and comprises 2,875 acres which formerly served as an Air Force base. Its available facilities include two parallel runways, one of which is 11,300 feet long and capable of handling the largest fully loaded aircraft, 40 acres of cargo ramp space, 321,000 square feet of warehouse space, and 198,000 square feet of office space. Airborne express, Emery Worldwide and United Parcel Service all have their Sacramento operations stationed at Mather Airport.

Airport access is critical to the region's air cargo business, and this is especially evident at Mather Airport. In 2001, Mather Airport handled 109,350 tons of airfreight and mail. Many of these shipments are very time-sensitive and demand just-in-time delivery. These include high tech goods, perishables and medical shipments that can be life-saving deliveries. For these reasons, although Mather Airport is located in Sacramento County, El Dorado County has a vested interest in maintaining adequate access to/from the airfield. El Dorado County's financial contribution for the High Occupancy Vehicle lanes from El Dorado Hills to Sunrise Boulevard in Sacramento County supports this interest by maintaining mobility along the US 50 corridor into El Dorado County.

Air transportation plays a key role in the movement of goods and people not only to locations outside of the county but also between locations within the county. There are three public airports in the county: Placerville, Cameron Park, and Georgetown. The County's role in air transportation is limited to land use regulation of the land surrounding the airports through the Zoning Ordinance and the actual operations of the two airports owned by the County: the Placerville Airport and the Georgetown Airport. State and federal agencies have primary jurisdiction over all airport facilities and operations in the county. For more information on airports within El Dorado County, please see Chapter 8, Aviation.

## **TRUCK TRANSPORT**

Truck transport remains the primary method of moving goods in California, and El Dorado County is no exception. While this mode uses much of the state's 168,000 highway miles, it is mostly concentrated to a 7,513 mile portion of the National Highway System.

Trucks are defined as heavy freight vehicles which meet the Service Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 (STAA) definitions as found in the California State Vehicle Code. US 50 is part of the STAA system and is a terminal access route up to the Sly Park Road exit (#60) in Pollock Pines. From Sly Park Road to SR 89 near South Lake Tahoe, US 50 is considered part of the California Legal Truck Network. SR 49, along the entire width of El Dorado County, is classified as a California Legal Advisory Route. Caltrans' 2003 truck volumes site estimates truck traffic at approximately 6% of total vehicle traffic on the US 50 corridor from east of Shingle Springs to Sly Park Road.

## GOODS MOVEMENT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

It is anticipated that cargo service into and out of Mather and Sacramento International airports will triple in the next 20 years. Whether products are shipped by rail, ship, air, or truck, regional highways and local roads are very likely to be used for some part of the trip. Caltrans data indicate that truck movements in the region more than doubled between 1980 and 1995. Freight movement by truck suffers from congestion on the roadway system, which delays deliveries and therefore may cause some economic loss to shippers. Mixing of auto traffic with truck traffic contributes to the congestion, and can pose safety and operational problems on the freeways.

These issues led to the construction of the Bass Lake Grade Truck Climbing Lane project on US 50 in 2002. The project created an additional lane to allow slower moving trucks to climb the steep grade between the Clarksville Overcrossing and Bass Lake Road Interchange. Future improvements to interchanges and multimodal enhancements along US 50, as well as efforts to improve parallel capacity adjacent to US 50 will be critical to maintain an adequate level of service to support interregional movement of goods and services into, through, and out of El Dorado County.

## GOODS MOVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Action Element of the RTP consists of short-term and long-term projects and activities that address regional transportation issues and needs. The federal conformity regulations (Title 40 CFR 93.106, Content of Transportation Plans) identify the short term horizon as a period up to ten years in the future and the long term horizon as projects or activities 20 years and beyond. The Action Element implements the Policy Element, must be consistent with the financial constraints identified in the Financial Element and must conform with the air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP).

The projects listed in Table 9-1 implement Goal 4 of the Policy Element of this RTP, which pertains to Goods Movement and reads as follows: *Provide for the safe and efficient movement of goods through and within El Dorado County.*

**TABLE 9-1: GOODS MOVEMENT SHORT AND LONG TERM ACTION PLAN  
(UP TO 10 YEARS AND 20 YEARS AND BEYOND)**

Project Description	Responsible/Support Agencies
Support projects that facilitate interregional, multi-modal goods transport to commercial and industrial areas	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC, SACOG, Caltrans, Industry
Support projects that facilitate interregional goods movement utilizing the regional system of airports	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC, SACOG, Caltrans, Industry
Support projects that address the timely movement of goods and service throughout the region	Local jurisdictions, EDCTC, SACOG, Caltrans, Industry
Improve US 50 in order to facilitate goods movement and access to jobs	Caltrans, SACOG, EDCTC, Local jurisdictions

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