

## **CHAPTER FIVE CONSEQUENCES OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION (MANDATORY CEQA SECTIONS)**

Sections 15126 through 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines highlight several issues that must be discussed within an EIR. These issues include growth inducing impacts, cumulative impacts, effects not found to be significant, significant and irreversible environmental changes, significant and unavoidable impacts, and a list of organizations and persons consulted during the preparation of this EIR. This section discusses each one of these issues below.

### **5.1 Growth Inducing Impacts**

Section 15126(g) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of a project's potential to foster economic or population growth, including ways in which a project could remove an obstacle to growth. Based on the CEQA Guidelines, growth inducement is any growth that exceeds planned growth of an area and results in new development that would not have taken place without implementation of the project. Typically, the growth-inducing potential of a project would be considered significant if it results in growth or population concentration that exceeds those assumptions included in pertinent master plans, land use plans, or projections made by regional planning authorities. The environmental effects of induced growth are secondary or indirect impacts of a project.

The population in the planning area is expected to grow from 147,045 (including 10,072 in the City of Placerville) to 197,875 (including 15,193 in the City of Placerville) by the year 2025. Employment in the planning is expected to grow from 51,644 jobs (including 13,402 in the City of Placerville) to 69,669 jobs in the planning area (including 14,446 in the City of Placerville) in 2025. This represents a population increase and employment increase of approximately 35 percent during the RTP planning horizon. The RTP will not directly cause any growth inducing impacts to the planning area. It is anticipated that El Dorado County, including the City of Placerville, will grow at the same rate, regardless of whether or not the RTP is implemented.

The RTP focuses on capital improvement projects that ensure that General Plan standards are met or maintained. The transportation system improvements included in the RTP are intended to respond to growth anticipated in adopted local General Plans. The County and City of Placerville (agencies responsible for approving land development projects) have fee programs that are intended to ensure that the general plan road improvements are adequately funded.

The RTP includes several objectives, policies, and performance measures that are intended to prevent population growth that is not planned for in local General Plans. Policy 1 (Goal 7, Objective A) states that the RTP shall "encourage jurisdictions to maintain their adopted Level of Service (LOS) on local streets and roads in accordance with the applicable General Plan Circulation Element." Additionally, Policy 1 (Goal 7, Objective B) states that the RTP shall "encourage jurisdictions to develop roadways that complement planned growth patterns, economic development programs, and requirements of infrastructure to support those land uses." Finally, the RTP contains the following performance measure: "Utilize land use forecasts consistent with adopted general plans as the basis for multi-modal transportation planning."

The RTP policies direct local jurisdictions to adhere to their respective general plans and direct applicable transportation planners to use those local general plans when planning the regions transportation system in order to maintain consistency with them. Because growth inducing impacts associated with the City and County general plans have already been addressed in the environmental documents prepared by each jurisdiction for those plans, and the general plans identify or require the RTP improvements, additional growth inducing impacts are not anticipated. The RTP self-mitigates this impact by incorporating the policies discussed above which will prevent indirect population growth beyond that planned for in applicable General Plans; therefore, this impact is considered *less-than-significant*.

## **5.2 Cumulative Impacts**

Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires a discussion of potential cumulative impacts that could result from a proposed project in conjunction with other projects in the vicinity. Section 15355 defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.”

To analyze the proposed project’s contribution to cumulative impacts, CEQA requires that the lead agency identify past, present and probable future projects in its vicinity, summarize their effects, and identify the contribution of the proposed project to cumulative impacts. This analysis focuses on the environmental effects that implementation of the proposed RTP, together with projected population and land use changes, would have assuming that these projections would occur regardless of whether the proposed improvements are developed.

Since the proposed RTP is confined to the western slope of El Dorado County and the City of Placerville, it is assumed that the area of potential cumulative effect includes the planning area, the remainder of the County within the Tahoe basin, and adjacent Counties potentially served or affected by the proposed transportation improvements.

As previously indicated, the 2005 population within the planning area is 147,045 and SACOG projects it to reach 197,875 by 2025. This increase in population is expected to generate a demand for new jobs, housing, infrastructure, public services and facilities, and utilities all of which have the potential for adverse environmental impacts.

### **EXISTING AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENT**

General plans and their associated EIRs, from within and surrounding the planning area, discuss the existing and proposed developments located within their jurisdictions and analyze their cumulative impacts. A review of these documents is necessary to show how planned development patterns may be cumulatively affected by RTP.

Sacramento County has planned for development along U.S. 50, while north of U.S. 50 the City of Folsom has planned for rapid urbanization. The other areas surrounding El Dorado County are currently used for agriculture or low density and rural residential development and there are currently no plans for urbanization of these areas.

The City of Placerville projects gradual growth and associated cumulative impacts to its natural resources, public services, transportation systems and noise environment. The City of South Lake Tahoe, which is located just outside the planning area, projects much slower growth, due to strict development regulations, with fewer associated cumulative impacts.

Several communities within the unincorporated portion of the County, including El Dorado Hills, are also planning for future development. El Dorado Hills is currently experiencing a great deal of both residential and commercial development pressure.

## **ANALYSIS OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS**

Several environmental topics were analyzed in the Initial Study and the impacts associated with the proposed RTP were determined to be no impact, a less-than-significant impact, or a less-than-significant impact with mitigation. The analysis in the Initial Study has identified that these impacts will not contribute any substantial incremental effects; therefore, the impacts from the following environmental issue areas will have a less-than-significant cumulative impact: Agricultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials (including potential effects associated with naturally occurring asbestos), Hydrology and Water Quality, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Public Services, Recreation, and Utilities and Service Systems. Potentially significant cumulative impacts in the following environmental areas are summarized below:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Transportation/Traffic

### ***Aesthetics***

Implementation of the improvement projects identified in the RTP, have the potential to result in cumulative impacts on the aesthetics in the planning area and surrounding communities. The cumulative impacts may include adverse affects to scenic vistas degradation of the visual character of the area, degradation of views within a scenic highway, or light or glare impacts. A cumulative impact could occur if a project would change the view to the foreground, middleground, or background elements of a broad viewshed, remove the visually important resources within a scenic highway, or install invasive lighting systems. However, the County and City General Plan(s) have established policies that protect the scenic qualities of the region, including broad viewsheds, scenic resources, and scenic highways, and standards that minimize the chance of light or glare impacts. Consistency with the established County and City policies would ensure that appropriate design measures, are incorporated into the design of each improvement project as necessary to avoid and/or minimize impacts to scenic vistas and resources that may be affected by the improvement project. Therefore, the impacts from the proposed project are not cumulatively considerable.

## ***Air Quality***

Implementation of improvement projects identified in the RTP, have the potential to result in cumulative impacts on air quality in the planning area and surrounding communities as a result of increased traffic capacity. Air quality is a regional environmental issue, with the majority of air pollutant emissions being created by motor vehicle use within the County's air basin and other air basins in the region. The planning area is located in the Mountain Counties Air Basin, which is designated as nonattainment for the state and national ozone standards and the state particulate (PM<sub>10</sub>) standard. Ozone pollution is the primary air quality impact of cumulative concern, because precursor emissions of ozone can occur throughout the region and combine to exacerbate attainment of air quality standards in El Dorado County. Pollutants transported from the San Francisco Bay area also contribute to regional air quality impacts.

The air quality model shows that over the 10-year and 20-year planning horizon there will be a steady decline in ROG, NO<sub>x</sub> and CO emissions. This information is based on the presumption that vehicle emissions technology will continue to improve each year in California based on new state and federal vehicle air emission requirements.

The RTP includes new travel demand management programs, which are intended to increase the availability of alternative modes of transportation. This is consistent with the inherent air quality model assumptions, as well as the overall goal of the air quality attainment plan for the region. Additionally, there are numerous transportation projects that are identified in the RTP that would improve traffic circulation and decrease congestion, which is expected to decrease the run and idle times for any given vehicle on any given trip. Implementation of the projects identified in the RTP, combined with the implementation of new federal and state vehicle emissions requirements, would allow El Dorado County and the City of Placerville to contribute toward regional conformance with the State Implementation Plan. Overall, the impacts from the RTP on ROG, NO<sub>x</sub>, and CO are not considered "cumulatively considerable."

The total PM<sub>10</sub> emissions are estimated to increase cumulatively with the population increase that is forecasted as a result of planned development within the planning area (Note: population is directly correlated to vehicle miles traveled, which is correlated to PM<sub>10</sub> emissions). The total PM<sub>10</sub> emissions increase over the 20-year horizon is .04 tons per day. This increase in emissions is due primarily to tire and brake wear, which is directly correlated to the amount of vehicle miles traveled per day. This impact is considered significant and unavoidable. The significant and unavoidable impact also translates into a "cumulatively considerable" incremental effect.

## ***Biological Resources***

The foothill region has experienced pressures from urban and suburban development. As a result of development in the foothills, a cumulative loss and fragmentation of natural habitats is a growing impact of concern. The RTP improvement projects have the potential to result in cumulative impacts on special status species, sensitive natural communities, such as riparian, valley oak woodland, gabbro soil plants (Pine Hill), streams, rivers, wet meadows, and vernal pools, or movement or migratory corridors in the planning area and surrounding communities.

Oak woodland is a habitat type that has experienced a cumulative loss and fragmentation as a result of growth pressures. Also, riparian and other aquatic or semi-aquatic habitats have experienced encroachment by urban uses. Populations of special-status species that occupy these habitats, such as rare plant communities and threatened or endangered species, such as the California red-legged frog, have experienced a cumulative loss of habitat and a reduction in numbers of individuals.

The state and federal governments have enacted laws, and both El Dorado County and the City of Placerville have established policies in their General Plans, to protect biological resources, including those mentioned above. Because the RTP is a program-level planning document it does not include any specific design measures for any future transportation improvements. If a transportation project is funded and the improvement designs are prepared, subsequent project-level environmental analysis will be required (unless it is deemed exempt). The design engineer will be required to work with local and state governments to ensure that the designs comply with local policies, ordinances, and recovery plans that protect biological resources. Consistency with the County and City policies and state and federal regulations would ensure that the project does not have cumulatively considerable impacts.

### ***Cultural Resources***

Implementation of improvement projects that are identified in the RTP have the potential to result in cumulative impacts on cultural resources in the planning area. Cultural resources are a site-specific resource, and although there is potential for the cumulative loss of such resources throughout the region, adopted County and City policies and regulations, as well as future project-level environmental review, would ensure that those resources are adequately protected. Although development projects, including the RTP improvement projects, always have the potential to incrementally affect cultural resources, mitigation measures have been identified in this EIR that, when implemented in conjunction with the adopted policies and regulations in the County and City, will reduce the incremental effects of the project to the point that the impact is not considered “cumulatively considerable.”

### ***Land Use and Planning***

The RTP improvement projects have the potential to enable cumulative development in the County and City of Placerville. The cumulative development is planned for and is described in text and maps within the General Plan(s) for El Dorado County and Placerville. These maps (Land Use and Circulation Plans) illustrate the form and function of the region. The RTP improvement projects would improve the circulation functions, which could facilitate development consistent with the planned form as illustrated in the General Plan(s) for these jurisdictions. Implementation of the RTP does not enable cumulative development inconsistent with the General Plan(s) for these jurisdictions, although it does not preclude project developers from filing a General Plan amendment with these jurisdictions. The RTP does not incorporate any General Plan amendment assumptions into the project description, as to do so would be speculative. Overall, the impact from the RTP on land use and planning is not considered “cumulatively considerable.”

## **Noise**

Implementation of the improvement projects that are identified in the RTP have the potential to result in cumulative noise impacts in the planning area and surrounding communities. The potential cumulative impacts may include short-term noise, generally associated with construction activities, or long-term noise, which is generally associated with operation of the improvement. Some of improvement projects involve widening/improving roadways that carry traffic into Sacramento County, Placer County, the State of Nevada, and other surrounding areas. Additionally, as overall development occurs and the average daily trips along the regional roadways increase, ambient noise levels will increase. The County and City General Plan(s) have established policies that define the noise levels that are acceptable. Consistency with the established County and City policies and noise standards would ensure that appropriate design measures are incorporated into the design of each improvement project as necessary to ensure that noise levels are below the acceptable levels. However, the increase in the ambient noise levels can not be mitigated. This is a significant and unavoidable impact. The significant and unavoidable impact also translates into a “cumulatively considerable” incremental effect.

## **Transportation/Traffic**

Traffic impacts are a regional concern. Some of the improvements identified in the RTP, such as improvements to highways, would create greater traffic flow allowing for traffic to more easily move from Sacramento County through El Dorado County (including, the unincorporated communities, the City of Placerville, and the City of South Lake Tahoe) to the State of Nevada. Interchange improvement projects will create greater access to areas such as new residential developments in El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park, which have additional traffic impacts to U.S. 50 and other County roads. As indicated in the traffic analysis for the El Dorado County General Plan, the LOS conditions on some study roadways are not expected to improve to acceptable levels of service. This is a significant and unavoidable cumulative impact. As indicated in the LOS analysis for the RTP, the improvement projects would either maintain or improve the LOS conditions on the study roadway segments. However, the improvement of LOS conditions on the study roadway segments does not improve the LOS conditions to acceptable levels. Although, cumulatively, the RTP provides beneficial impacts to the regional traffic conditions, there are no feasible mitigation measures that would fully mitigate the traffic impacts from cumulative development in the region.

### **5.3 Effects Not Found to be Significant**

Section 15128 of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR contain a statement briefly indicating the reason that various effects of a project were determined not to be significant, and were therefore not discussed in detail in the EIR. Some of those effects are discussed in Chapter Three. The effects listed here were determined to be less than significant based on the discussion contained in the Initial Study/Notice of Preparation and responses to the Notice of Preparation contained in Appendix A. The significance criteria set forth in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines was used to determine the proposed project’s impact on each of these environmental topics.

## AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Implementation of the RTP improvements would not convert a farm operation into a non-agricultural use, nor would it result in a need for land use changes or rezoning that accommodate uses other than agricultural. There would be no conflict with the allowed uses under the existing General Plan or Zoning Ordinance in the County or City of Placerville, and there would be no need for a cancellation or the filing of a notice of non-renewal of a Williamson Act contract. Land located throughout the County that is designated and used for agricultural purposes, including Agricultural Commercial uses in Placerville, would have improved transportation systems throughout these agricultural areas, which are expected to improve the ability for farmers/ranchers to move the agricultural products to the existing markets and/or bring the markets directly to the farms/ranch/retail shop.

The proposed project would not result in the conversion of large plots of Important Farmland to a non-agricultural use. There is some grazing land located in the El Dorado Hills area that could be affected by the improvement projects. This grazing land provides minimal economic value to the region's agricultural economy. According to the Department of Conservation's Important Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program, the soil qualities that are characteristic of Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, or Unique Farmland are of the highest value for agricultural purposes. The loss of grazing land is not considered a significant adverse impact. There is not any new County or City roadway that is located immediately adjacent to farmland land as designated in the General Plan(s) for these agencies.

For the reasons identified above, the impact on agricultural resources from the proposed project is *less than significant*, as indicated in the initial study, and was therefore not discussed in more detail in this EIR.

## GEOLOGY AND SOILS

The proposed transportation improvements are not located within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone and there are no active faults located within the County. There will always be a chance that a fault located anywhere in the state (or region) could rupture and cause seismic ground shaking, although the relative risk to safety from the potential ground shaking within the County is considered low even though there are several inactive fault systems that traverse the County. Implementation of the proposed project would result in a *less-than-significant* impact from rupture of an earthquake fault and seismic ground shaking.

Liquefaction typically requires a significant sudden decrease of shearing resistance in cohesionless soils and a sudden increase in water pressure, which is typically associated with an earthquake of high magnitude. From a regional perspective, the soils located within the County have a low potential for liquefaction. There is a potential for soil inclusions that have a higher liquefaction potential. Each improvement project would be required to have a specific geotechnical study prepared and incorporated into the improvement design. The geotechnical study would identify if there were any unknown soil inclusions that posed a higher risk of liquefaction, and recommendations for mitigating the potential risk. Based on the known conditions of the soils within the County, implementation of the RTP would have a *less-than-significant* impact from liquefaction.

A relatively high percentage of the County is prone to landslides based on the slopes. There will be an ongoing potential for areas of the County to be or become unstable and result in landslides. Some transportation improvements identified in the RTP will traverse across areas where the soil characteristics, drainage, slope, vegetation, and others factors cause the landslide potential to be relatively high. Each improvement project would be required to have a specific geotechnical study prepared and incorporated into the improvement design. The geotechnical study would identify the specific soil conditions, surface and subsurface drainage capability, slope steepness, and other factors that may contribute to landslide risk.

Based on specific findings at each locality, the geotechnical engineer will recommend detailed engineering measures that are necessary to reduce the safety risks associated with landslides. Implementation of project specific geotechnical engineering measures would reduce the safety risks of landslides to a reasonable level. Therefore, implementation of the RTP would have a *less-than-significant* impact from landslides. The potential risk of lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse is considered low and implementation of the RTP would have a *less-than-significant* impact from these issues.

As discussed above, portions of the planning area have a relatively high risk of landslides (a form of erosion) due to the steep slopes located in the region. The potential for loss of topsoil and erosion is relatively high due to the natural characteristics of the region. Grading activities associated with the transportation improvements identified in the RTP would increase the potential for erosion during construction. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) will require a project specific Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) to be prepared for each transportation improvement that disturbs an area one-acre or larger. The SWPPPs will include project specific best management measures that are designed to control drainage and erosion.

The County adopted, and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) subsequently approved, the County of El Dorado Storm Water Management Plan in 2004. The document describes “the minimum procedures and practices that the County uses to reduce the discharge of pollutants in effluent from storm drainage systems owned or operated by the County.” Furthermore, each transportation improvement will include detailed project specific drainage plans that control storm water runoff and erosion. Implementation of the proposed RTP itself would therefore result in a *less-than-significant* impact on soil erosion.

Expansive soils are those that shrink or swell with the change in moisture content. The volume of change is influenced by the quantity of moisture, by the kind and amount of clay in the soil, and by the original porosity of the soil. Shrinking and swelling can damage roads and other structures unless special engineering design is incorporated into the project plans. Implementation of the proposed RTP itself would result in a *less-than-significant* impact from expansive soils.

The proposed RTP would not result in the generation of sewer water or the expansion of septic infrastructure. Implementation of the proposed project would have *no impact* on this environmental issue.

## HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The proposed RTP would improve the travel conditions of transportation systems that are currently used to transport of hazardous materials. All transportation of hazardous materials is regulated by federal and state laws and local ordinances. The proposed transportation improvements identified in the RTP would not cause or require routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Nor are any of the transportation improvements located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous material sites that would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment. Therefore, implementation of the proposed RTP would result in a *less-than-significant* impact.

Implementation of the improvements identified in the RTP would require construction activities, including grading, which has the potential to release naturally occurring asbestos into the air. Construction activities related to each improvement project that is located in the unincorporated areas would be required to comply with the County's *Naturally Occurring Asbestos and Dust Protection Ordinance* prior to construction. Compliance with this ordinance would require project specific asbestos testing of surface materials and submittal/approval of a Contingent Asbestos Hazard Dust Mitigation Plan to the County for grading activities in areas identified on the County's Potential Asbestiform Minerals Map. Implementation of the Mitigation Plan would ensure that adequate dust control and asbestos hazard mitigation measures are implemented during project construction. This ordinance applies to all grading activities in the unincorporated areas. Compliance with the ordinance, and implementation of the Contingent Asbestos Hazard Dust Mitigation Plan would ensure that the potential impact is reduced to a *less-than-significant* level.

Some of the transportation improvements identified in the RTP are located at several airports within the County, one of which is located in the vicinity of the City of Placerville. These improvements do not create a safety risk for people residing in the area, and they do not conflict with the airport land use plans for which they are located within. The proposed RTP would improve airport facilities, which is expected to improve the safety conditions located at these airports. This is a beneficial impact. Therefore, the RTP would have *no adverse impact* on this environmental issue.

The transportation improvements identified in the RTP would not impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. The proposed RTP would improve transportation systems throughout the County, which is expected to improve the emergency response and evacuation routes throughout the County. Therefore, the RTP would have *no adverse impact* on this environmental issue.

The transportation improvements identified in the RTP would not result in the construction of structures that would be occupied by humans; therefore, it would not expose people or structures to a significant risk involving wildland fires. The proposed RTP would improve transportation systems throughout the County and City of Placerville, which is expected to improve the ability for fire protection services to access areas that have a high wildland fire risk rating. This is considered a beneficial impact. Therefore, the RTP would have *no adverse impact* on this environmental issue.

## **HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

Implementation of the improvements identified in the RTP would not violate any waste discharge requirements, substantially deplete groundwater supplies, or interfere with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in an aquifer volume.

The construction phase of the improvement projects could cause storm water runoff that could carry topsoil into downstream waterways and ultimately waters of the U.S. As required by the Clean Water Act (CWA), each specific improvement project that is one acre or larger will be required to prepare and implement a SWPPP that includes best management practices for grading, and preservation of topsoil.

The project proponent for each specific project that is one-acre or larger will submit the SWPPP with a Notice of Intent to the RWQCB to obtain a General Permit. SWPPPs are designed to control storm water quality degradation to the extent practicable using best management practices during and after construction. All County projects, even those that are smaller than one-acre, would be required to implement water quality protection measures consistent with the Storm Water Management Plan for Western El Dorado County.

The RWQCB is an agency responsible for reviewing the SWPPP with the Notice of Intent, prior to issuance of a General Permit for the discharge of storm water during construction activities. The RWQCB accepts General Permit applications (with the SWPPP and Notice of Intent) after specific projects have been approved by the lead agency. The project proponent for each specific project that is larger than one acre is required to obtain a General Permit for discharge of storm water during construction activities prior to commencing construction in order to comply with the CWA.

Implementation of the improvements identified in the RTP may alter the existing drainage pattern in specific areas, including the alteration of a course of a stream or river, which could result in erosion, siltation, or flooding on- or off-site. The improvement projects are not funded or approved at this point and no project specific plans are available. Each improvement project would require a specific level of design review to ensure that the engineering does not result in substantial alterations in the natural drainage systems and that the project is consistent with County and City policy.

The USACE is responsible for issuing permits for the placement of fill or discharge of material, into waters of the U.S. These permits are required under Sections 401 and 404 of the CWA. The CWA further requires that there is no net loss of wetlands, meaning that if a project involves the removal of a wetland, or portion thereof, a wetland must be created elsewhere. Improvement projects that involve instream construction, such as bridges, trigger the need for these CWA permits and related environmental reviews by USACE. Subsequent environmental review, design review, and the CWA permitting requirements would ensure that the impacts are reduced to a reasonable level. Additionally, a general Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) permit was adopted by the SWRCB in May of 2004 (Water Quality Order 2004-0004-DWQ) for projects resulting in the discharge of fill to waters of the State that are not waters of the United States.

Implementation of the improvements identified in the RTP would not place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, place structures, which would impede or redirect flood flows within a 100-year flood hazard area, nor would it expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding (including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam, or inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow).

For these reasons the impact from the proposed project is *less than significant* with regard to this topic and was therefore not discussed in greater detail in this EIR.

## **MINERAL RESOURCES**

No improvements included in the RTP will be located adjacent to land designated as mineral resource districts by the County. The City of Placerville does not contain any land designated for mineral extraction. Because implementation of the improvements identified in the RTP would not convert a mineral extraction operation into another use, or result in a need for land use changes that accommodate uses other than mineral extraction, and give that the types of improvements identified in the RTP are allowed uses in all land use designations and zoning districts in the County and City of Placerville, the impact on land classified as mineral resource districts was considered *less than significant* in the initial study and was therefore not discussed in more detail in this EIR.

## **POPULATION AND HOUSING**

As was previously discussed under the cumulative analysis for Land Use and Planning, the RTP improvement projects have the potential to enable cumulative development in the County and City of Placerville, which will affect the form and function of the region. The planned form and function of the region is illustrated in the Land Use and Circulation Plans from the County and City General Plan(s). The RTP improvement projects would improve the circulation functions (consistent with the Circulation Element(s)), which could facilitate development consistent with the planned form as illustrated in the Land Use Plan(s). The RTP does not facilitate development that is inconsistent with planned form and function of the region, although it does not preclude project developers from filing a General Plan amendment that could result in a change to the form and/or function of the region. The RTP does not include any General Plan amendment assumptions into the project description.

The improvements identified in the RTP have the potential to result in the displacement of a small number of residences in the event that right-of-way acquisition is required. There are not currently any plans for acquisition of property, as improvement drawings have not been engineered or approved. If any residences must be acquired due to physical design constraints, the displacement of any housing would not result in the construction of a significant amount of replacement housing elsewhere. For this reason the proposed project has a *less-than-significant* impact on the displacement of people and housing and was therefore not discussed in more detail in this EIR.

## **PUBLIC SERVICES**

The improvements identified in the RTP will not result in an increased need for any public services or facilities. The transportation improvements are expected to improve travel conditions throughout the County, which would improve travel conditions to existing public facilities, such as recreation, schools, and libraries, and is expected to improve the travel conditions for public services such as police and fire protection during responses. These are considered beneficial impacts. For these reasons the proposed project will have *no adverse impact* on public services and is therefore not discussed in more detail in this EIR.

## **RECREATION**

The improvements identified in the RTP will not result in an increased need for any recreational facilities. The transportation improvements are expected to improve travel conditions throughout the County, which would improve travel conditions to existing parks and recreation facilities. These are considered beneficial impacts. For these reasons the proposed project will have *no adverse impact* on public services and is therefore not discussed in more detail in this EIR.

## **UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

The improvements identified in the RTP will not result in an increased need for any other utilities such as water supply, wastewater treatment, storm drainage infrastructure or solid waste disposal. For this reason the proposed project has *no adverse impact* on utilities and is therefore not discussed in greater detail in this EIR.

### **5.4 Significant And Irreversible Environmental Changes**

The proposed RTP is a programmatic level planning document and does not directly cause environmental impacts. Rather it has the potential to cause indirect impacts as a result of the improvement projects identified in the RTP. Some improvement projects have the potential to cause significant and irreversible changes to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise, and traffic in the planning area. However, there are numerous adopted County and City policies, policies proposed in the RTP, local, state, and federal regulations, and mitigation measures that are presented in this EIR that are intended to prevent significant and irreversible changes if possible. The process of designing each project would require the implementing agency to review the design for consistency with adopted policies, rules, and regulations. Consistency with the established County and City policies would ensure that appropriate design measures, are incorporated into the design of each improvement project as necessary to avoid and/or minimize significant and irreversible changes.

## **5.5 Significant and Unavoidable Impacts**

### **AIR QUALITY**

Over the 20-year planning horizon the population is estimated to increase in the region. The increase in population would result in an increase in the total vehicle miles traveled and total trips. The EMFAC2002 model indicates that the totals for ROG, NO<sub>x</sub> and CO are expected to decline over that same period due to new state and federal vehicle air emissions requirements. However, the model also indicates that the PM<sub>10</sub> emissions would increase from .27 tons per day, currently, to .31 tons per day in 2025, which is due primarily to tire and brake wear. The region has been classified as non-attainment for PM<sub>10</sub> since the early 90s. There are no assumptions built into model that assume PM<sub>10</sub> reductions due to new advances in technology. The RTP proposes programs that are intended to reduce the total vehicle miles traveled per capita, although these programs would not offset the total emissions contributed from the expected population increases. Therefore, there are not any programs that can prevent, reduce, or avoid this impact, although it is not a new impact. Furthermore, there are no feasible mitigation measures or new foreseeable technologies that can prevent, reduce, or avoid this impact. This is a *significant and unavoidable* impact.

### **NOISE**

Development of improvement projects identified in the RTP would require grading and construction activities that would intermittently and temporarily generate noise levels above ambient background levels. Noise levels in the immediate vicinity of the construction sites could increase, sometimes for extended durations. The proposed RTP could also have noise impacts as a result of development and operation of subsequent improvement projects during both the short and long-term. While many of these projects will likely have no effect on the operational noise generation of the facility, some improvement projects, which involve new facilities or capacity enhancements for existing facilities, could affect noise-sensitive land uses.

Noise-sensitive land uses could be exposed to noise in excess of normally acceptable noise levels or increases in noise as a result of the operation of expanded or new transportation facilities (i.e., increased traffic resulting from roadway capacity improvements, new transit facilities, airport modifications, etc.). The County and City have adopted a Noise Element of their General Plan that establishes noise related policies that, when implemented, protect noise sensitive receptors. The policies that are laid out in the Noise Element(s) are consistent with federal and state regulations designed to protect noise sensitive receptors. Consistency with the adopted policies and established regulations would ensure that the project does not exceed acceptable noise thresholds in noise sensitive areas. Although the policy and regulatory controls for noise related impacts are in place in the planning area, construction related noise impacts and operational related noise impacts from the subsequent improvement projects will increase the ambient noise levels. This increase in ambient noise levels is *significant and unavoidable*.

## TRAFFIC

The regional traffic modeling that was conducted as part of the El Dorado County General Plan Update showed that buildout of the General Plan would result in a deficient LOS along some of the study roadways. The conclusion that was made in the General Plan EIR based on that traffic modeling was that the impact is significant and unavoidable.

The RTP includes improvement projects that were created to improve the traffic conditions within the regional transportation system. However, based on the LOS evaluation of the regional transportation system with the RTP improvement projects, the LOS conditions will not improve to acceptable levels from the RTP projects alone. The improvement projects will either maintain or improve the level of service; however, the significant and unavoidable regional traffic impacts that are identified in the El Dorado County General Plan EIR will remain *significant and unavoidable*. Implementation of the RTP improvements and consistency with the adopted policies and mitigation measures would ensure consistency with the local General Plans; however, there are no feasible mitigation measures that can fully mitigate the regional traffic impacts from growth in the region.