

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Summary

On May 29, 2019, the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC) hosted the first Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting. The meeting took place at Placerville Town Hall, located at 549 Main Street in Placerville.

An overview of the US 50 Recreational Hot Spot Study project is provided at the end of this summary.

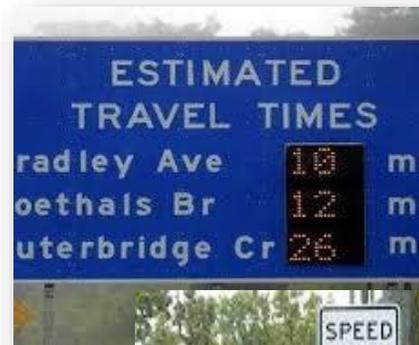
Presentation Summary

Celia McAdam, Principal at AIM Consulting welcomed stakeholders to the first SAC meeting.

Woody Deloria, Executive Director at EDCTC, welcomed and thanked stakeholders for participating in the first SAC meeting, noting that public engagement in Placerville is key to the success of the effort. The project is necessary due to the increase in traffic throughout the year, which presents a safety and quality of life issue. EDCTC and the City of Placerville want to hear from the stakeholders and the public.

Kevin Yount from Caltrans District 3 introduced the overall project to stakeholders and outlined the goals. The specific process of the study is to look at existing conditions, develop solutions and prioritize what projects need to happen. The study will improve safety and efficiency of US 50 for both local and regional recreational travel.

Mr. Yount explained the five US 50 corridor project and how the Hot Spot Study will help the project team understand the issues of the corridor and identify solutions that address increased levels of tourism/recreation travel, which increases congestion levels on US 50. Use of technology that could improve congestion and safety is a key component of the study, and includes ideas like traffic stop warning system signs, real time travel displays, congestion-based ramp metering and traffic signal



adjustments, safety advisories for speed limits as conditions change, speed monitor feedback signs, and mobile alerts / traffic information.

Woody Deloria gave an overview of the historical efforts to address congestion on US 50 through the Placerville area, emphasizing that the traffic problems are not a new issue. In 1963, Caltrans and El Dorado County agreed to complete the median barrier through Placerville and east through Camino. Two years later in 1965, there was an amendment to the previous agreement, which included the interchange at the Camino Heights subdivision. In 1989, a project study report was done through public meetings to consider operational improvements on US 50 through Placerville and into Camino. In 1996, public meetings were held during an additional project study report was done to consider grade separations, fly over ramps and widening to six lanes. In 2000, the Placerville traffic operational improvements traffic report evaluated and identified that the alternative proposed improvements would not eliminate congestion in Placerville and public meetings were held. In 2002, Caltrans led the US 50 Operational Improvements project report to consider auxiliary lanes along with improved bridges over Hangtown Creek and Placerville Drive with a connection to Main Street. In 2008, construction began on the US 50 Operational Improvements project to construct an eastbound auxiliary lane, the Hangtown Bridge improvements and the Placerville Drive Connection. In 2010, the State Route 49 Realignment Study was completed to evaluate options to move State Route 49 out of downtown Placerville but all options were deemed too costly. In 2014, the Bay to Basin Tourism and Recreation Travel Impact Study quantified tourism and recreation travel on US 50 from the Bay Area to the Tahoe Basin. In 2016, the Agritourism Study was completed to evaluate agricultural related tourism traffic impacts and proposed solutions.



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Rebecca Neves, City Engineer at the City of Placerville, emphasized the importance of addressing congestion problems on US 50, citing concerns from economic development and public safety perspectives. The City receives large numbers of comments from the public about the change in signal timing, however, all options have been exhausted with the current geometry. Caltrans does often change the signal timing after the 2008 construction project identified that this was a temporary fix to lighten the traffic impacts. The City would like to know what options the community would be willing to re-visit and their values as well as to obtain input about past projects and concepts as the project moves forward.

Discussion

Celia McAdam began the discussion portion of the meeting. One of the meeting objectives was to create a discussion for the stakeholders to get involved in identifying community values as it relates to Placerville and the surrounding areas, including those that are most important as well as those which cannot be compromised. McAdam noted the values identified will inform goals that the project team comes up with that will filter into the overall study.

Celia McAdam prompted the stakeholders with the following questions:

- What are the stakeholders' values for US 50 through Placerville?
- What are the community characteristics / values that cannot be compromised?

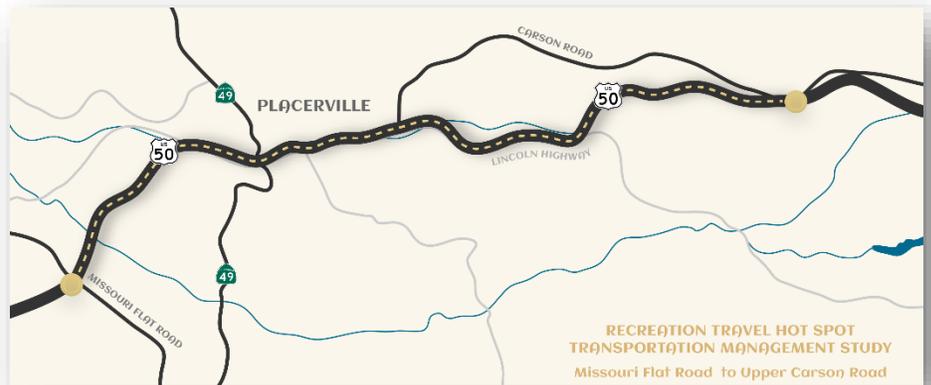


Responses received from the stakeholders:

- Is the City's initiative banning us of roundabouts also applied to the highway? If yes, why don't we put stop signs on the highway in El Dorado Hills and Cameron Park?
 - *Follow-Up: No, the City does not have jurisdiction on the highway.*
- The Old Town District bypass had no effect on growth for the City of Placerville. We can look at it as an option if it is done properly, and look at other ideas that have downtowns with retail entertainment and clearly designated wayfinding signs, such as the Town of Truckee.

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- A community value is to provide clean air by minimizing greenhouse gas emissions and reducing the amount of time cars idle on US 50 and streets in Placerville.
- Another community value is a good economy and vitality to support residents and visitors that travel through Placerville on a daily basis.
- A non-starter would be if the improvements take away from historical sites or views of Placerville and the US 50 corridor.



US 50 Hot Spot Management Study Corridor

- We need to minimize auto emissions that effect the health of all residents in Placerville. Carbon monoxide levels in the summertime on US 50 are outrageous. The problem comes from the idling of vehicles in a small area with multiple stop lights. Healthy air equals a healthy community.
- We need to reduce congestion / delay that people have when visiting Placerville or traveling through the area. Development will continue and congestion in and around Placerville due to stop lights will only increase, which will create irritation for visitors. We need to decrease congestion in town.
- There is not only congestion on US 50, but on Main Street in Placerville as well. Removing the stop light will not solve the problem; we need to provide efficient movement of people going through town and US 50 in all directions. There are many concerns about the traffic on Main Street and keeping a vibrant downtown is very important. We need to provide an easy on and off of Highway 50 as we do not currently have one. The Spring and Canal Street exits are not good access points. We should improve the whole transportation system through Placerville and US 50.
- We need to keep the historical significance of Placerville and the historical items must be preserved. Economic vitality messaging is important in understanding this project. Creating an easy on and off access from US 50 is necessary.
- An important value needs to be safety and the perception of safe travel. When congestion occurs on US 50, travelers try to take the side streets on Main or Pacific and



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those streets get backed up as well. There are a high number of fatal accidents and the congestion adds extended response times for emergency services. We need to focus on not just actual safety, but the perception of safety. For example, large numbers of visitors came for Memorial Day, but US 50 and local roads had nowhere to put them, which is how you get massive amounts of congestion. It backs up local roads not only in Placerville, but El Dorado County as well. There needs to be a way to efficiently move traffic and proper signage to keep people safety and feeling safe.

McAdam prompt: I am hearing that you value historical Main Street in Placerville as an economic hub for this part of El Dorado County, and also value safety and security for residents and visitors, but what other things do you value in Placerville? What things do you hold near and dear?

- Not only in Placerville, but we live rurally, and we want to be able to access US 50 without risking our lives. Our livelihood depends on agriculture and visitors visiting the farms and buying products throughout the year. Not just in Apple Hill, but also going up to Tahoe. We need to preserve and support agriculture to make sure that customers can get to the farms safely and pleasantly.
- How do we define quality of life? Placerville has a small-town atmosphere; it is not just a tourist town. We need to find out how we define quality of life and what we need to preserve. Preserving historical assets is very important and roundabouts destroy that history. Be careful on what those assets are – history is important.
- Recreation and outdoor activities are important in terms of access to local business, tourism, etc. Activities can include rafting, hunting, fishing, hiking. This is where the Bay Area residents come in their free time.
- From a county perspective, we are the largest employers and there are no restaurants on campus and we have limited time to get food. We need to provide easy access to food businesses to support the vibrancy of downtown. There are never empty storefronts, which means the economy is doing well. It is relaxing, but not if you can never get there.
- Traffic flows like water and if traffic is blocked off, you find another way. Not just on the Main Street, but there are other streets that locals find.
- We need to have accessibility options throughout El Dorado County. My family and I do not go out on Sundays because we know we are unable to access the places we want to go. We want to be able to access what the city has to offer.

McAdam prompt: What about safety in natural disasters? For example, access problems in getting people out when there is a fire – is that a consideration? Or should we only rely on emergency folks?

- It is a huge consideration and one that we cannot take for granted.

Celia McAdam continued the discussion with the following questions:

- Based on the goals discussed, what criteria should be used to evaluate proposed improvements?
- What ideas are we willing to revisit or which ones are no longer appropriate?

Responses from the stakeholders:

- How do we judge options for improvements to US 50? This includes hot spots in recreation and measurement of congestion.
- When the public and local businesses rejected the original proposal in 1996, there was a different mentality than the one we have today. Downtown owners realize that there needs to be a change today and the issues will only become worse.
- I agree with the above statement.
- Should we revisit the original proposal?
- Finding solutions is a main priority and adaptive technology is not an ultimate solution.
- Adaptive technology is not going to work, and it will take a long time to construct and get funding. A long-term solution is needed.
- An interim solution has been changing the signal timing. Someone physically must make the changes, but it has been very low cost.
- Are we looking for a long-term solution in terms of traffic backups through Placerville to reduce / eliminate congestion?
 - *Follow-Up: Yes.*
- This may be a project that goes beyond the horizon of 20 years.
- The 1996 project may be a starting point, but we do have different ideas now.
- Do you mean to look at all new options?



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- *Follow-Up: Yes, to look at best practices and see what has worked in the past.*
- The criteria comes down to congestion relief because adaptive technology is not realistic. We need to have everything on the table to meet the criteria.
- If you go extreme with a flyover at the interchange, you will have lots of pushback. Personally, I did not move here to be part of the Bay Area or Southern California, but because El Dorado County has the rural feel. This needs to be considered when you are trying to keep the local feel. People will come here no matter what for holidays, but you need to consider whether you want to make it a big freeway or keep the local / rural feel.
- That is what the General Update Plan is for. US 50 is an agricultural and business corridor and the question is whether you want to close the gate once you move here.
- The criteria needs to take into account of the local community character and the history. The flyover will look like a massive freeway project and we need to come up with a solution that meets local character criteria.
- The traffic now takes away from the local character.
- Local people know that traffic congestion in this area is a reality, which is why some people don't travel on Sundays. More people sit in traffic and idle their cars and throw trash out their windows.
- An additional two million people are moving into the area within the next 20-30 years and they all want to go to Apple Hill, Placerville and Tahoe. In order to get there, they must travel through this corridor, and we need to make accommodations for the future numbers. Much of the congestion goes through US 50 and El Dorado County.
- What is the community willing to do? What criteria can we use to evaluate this?
- This is a tough question. Without making improvements, where will the land go? There are homes and businesses on each side of US 50, so this is not an easy fix.
- Is part of the criteria to minimize the impact on local businesses and residents?
- The criteria has to balance the tourism and resident traffic as well as the local economy. Expanding the corridor is expensive and whatever project is delivered must look at those three factors.
- We are more so at a point where we are trying to engage the community on how much we are willing to do to relieve congestion.
- We aren't being given a choice yet.
 - *Follow-Up: We are not at that step yet, but we wanted to find common ground on what we want to see before we decided what will fix it.*

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- What if we do nothing? What will this look like in 20 years if we only look at low-cost solutions?
- Are you saying that existing conditions are unacceptable?
 - *Follow-Up: The study should include an understanding of future impacts and what the pros / cons are for each.*
- US 50 had a huge capital project in 1955 and it cut right through Placerville. Part of the proposal was to do a bypass and a lot of adjustments were made back then too – this is nothing new.
- You can do a bypass assessment with huge costs / impacts, would residual impact to US 50 have enough economic development to people that use it?
- Yes, you have proven that is the case. You are filtering out people who are actually interested in town, as opposed to passing through on the way to Tahoe, by doing a bypass.
- The stigma has changed as the commute changes; it is more pleasant when you don't have to fight traffic.
- We've been talking a lot about people in cars, but what about bikes and pedestrians? It is scary for people on the north side of US 50 even with controlled lights to bike or walk. We need to think more about bicyclists and pedestrians, especially with the bike trails. We need to start thinking about accessibility for alternate transportation modes and safety.
- For a rural county, we have a robust transit system.
- Wildfire risk and ability to get out may be community's top priority right now. A flyover through the City may not be rejected. My criteria would be speed of evacuation – does the project improve emergency access options?
- With more fuel-efficient vehicles, people are commuting more and more and could be why local residents support a flyover. My criteria would be for the study to consider travel time during commute hours and on weekends.



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- Criteria is always based on funding. We need to determine both short term and long-term solutions.
- Short term solutions should not preclude long term solutions. A mini bypass would make a larger bypass more expensive. We need to keep long term options open.

Next Steps

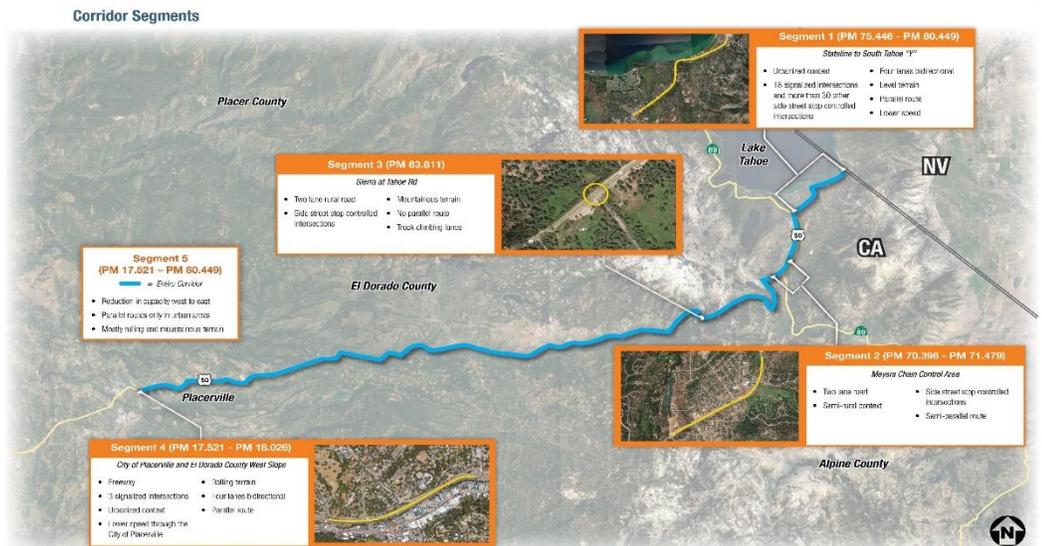
The project team concluded the meeting by thanking all stakeholder representatives for participating in the first Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting.

The first SAC meeting presentation and summary will be posted to the EDCTC website. There will be one public workshop in July and one additional stakeholder advisory committee meeting in August.

Project Overview

Thank you for your participation in the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) for the US 50 Recreational Travel Hot Spot Study. The study is looking at how to improve traffic flow on US 50 from the western edge of Placerville all the way to South Lake Tahoe.

The Caltrans team along with the El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), the City of Placerville and other jurisdictions are working on identifying existing conditions, analyzing different case studies for best practices and reviewing previous traffic studies and project reports on US 50. The study will divide the US 50 corridor between Placerville and South Lake Tahoe into segments, which were chosen based on an outcome of concerns from the public and local officials.





US 50 Recreational Hot Spot Study
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1
Wednesday, May 29, 2019

Placerville Town Hall, 549 Main Street, Placerville

Traffic on US 50 will increase, resulting in higher levels of congestion creating public safety impacts for the local community in and around Placerville. Once the project team completes the collection of data and analysis of the existing conditions, the study will identify and evaluate mobility characteristics within the corridor including cars, transit, pedestrian and bicycles.



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Appendix

- PowerPoint Presentation
- Feedback Form

US 50 Recreational Hot Spot Study

Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 2019 | 10:30 A.M. – NOON
PLACERVILLE TOWN HALL



Welcome, Overview and Introductions

Meeting Overview

- Why we are here

Agenda

- Welcome, Overview and Introduction
- Project Background and Goals
- Existing Conditions and Studies To-Date
- Discussion
- Next Steps

Project Objectives for the Placerville segment

Introductions

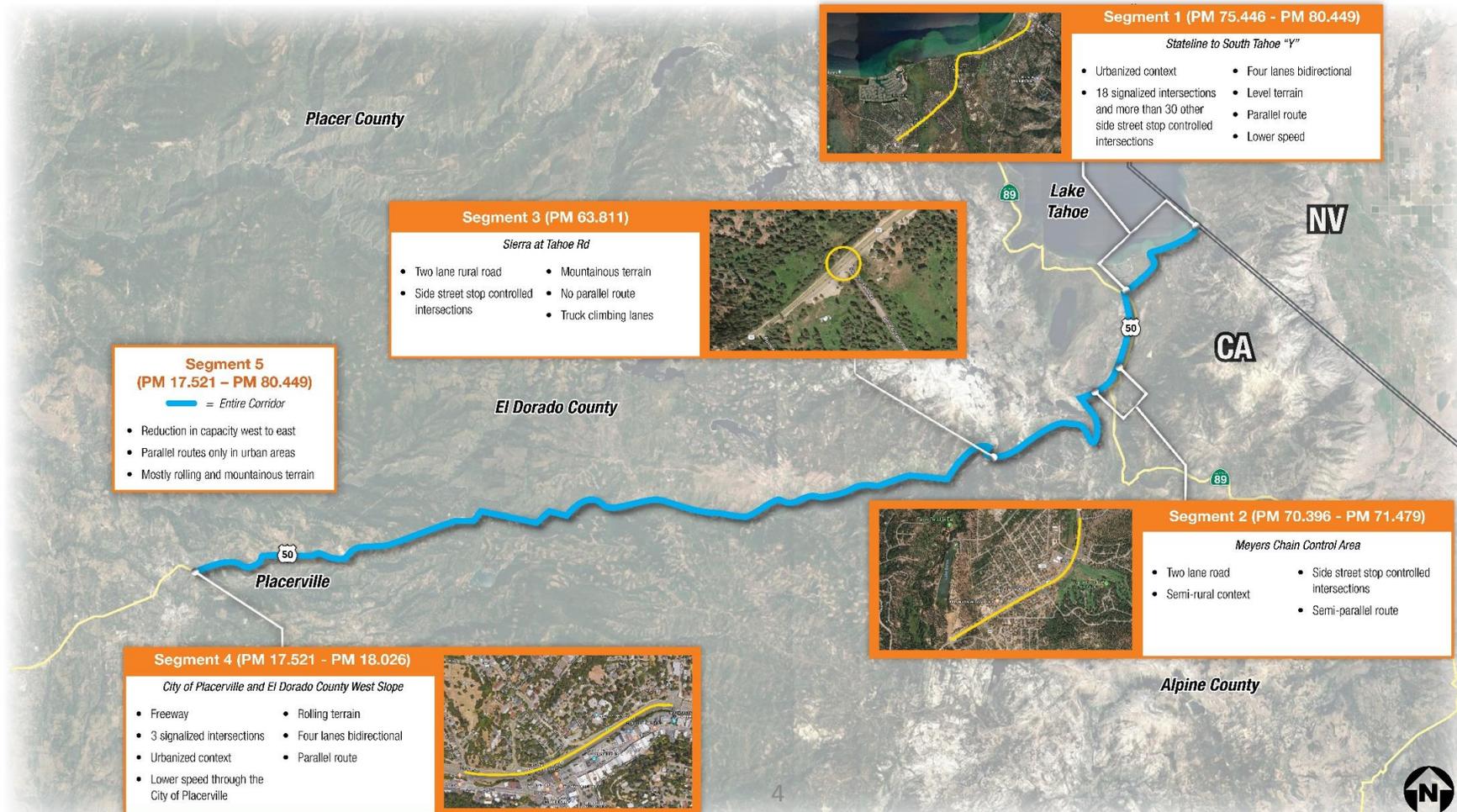
Overall Project Background and Goals

DISTRICT 3 RECREATION TRAVEL HOT SPOT TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT STUDY

RFO #74-18001

Project Background

Corridor Segments





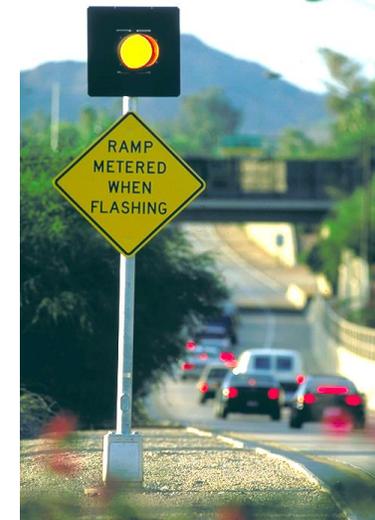
Using Technology to Improve Roadway Congestion and Safety



Stopped Traffic Warning System



Comparative Real Time Travel Times



Congestion based Ramp Metering



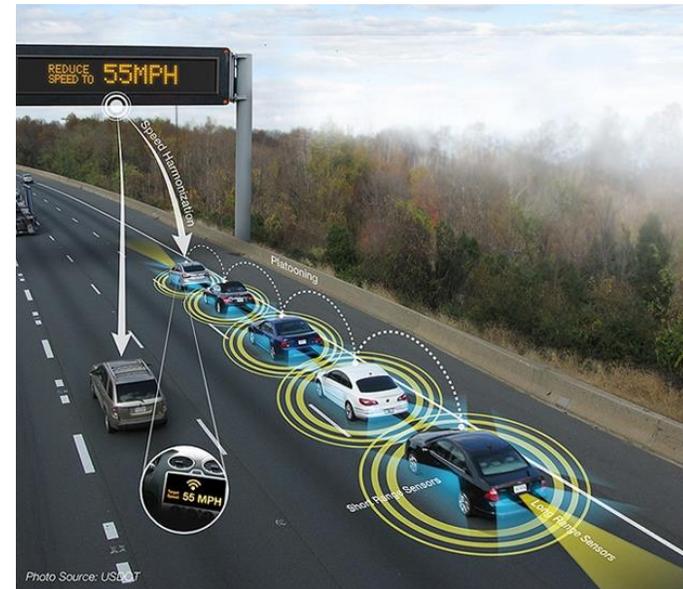
Using Technology to Improve Roadway Congestion and Safety



Safety Advisories for Speed Limits



Congestion based Traffic Signal System



Connected Vehicle Applications



Using Technology to Improve Roadway Congestion and Safety



Traffic signalization technologies



Speed Monitors



Mobile Alerts/Traveler Information



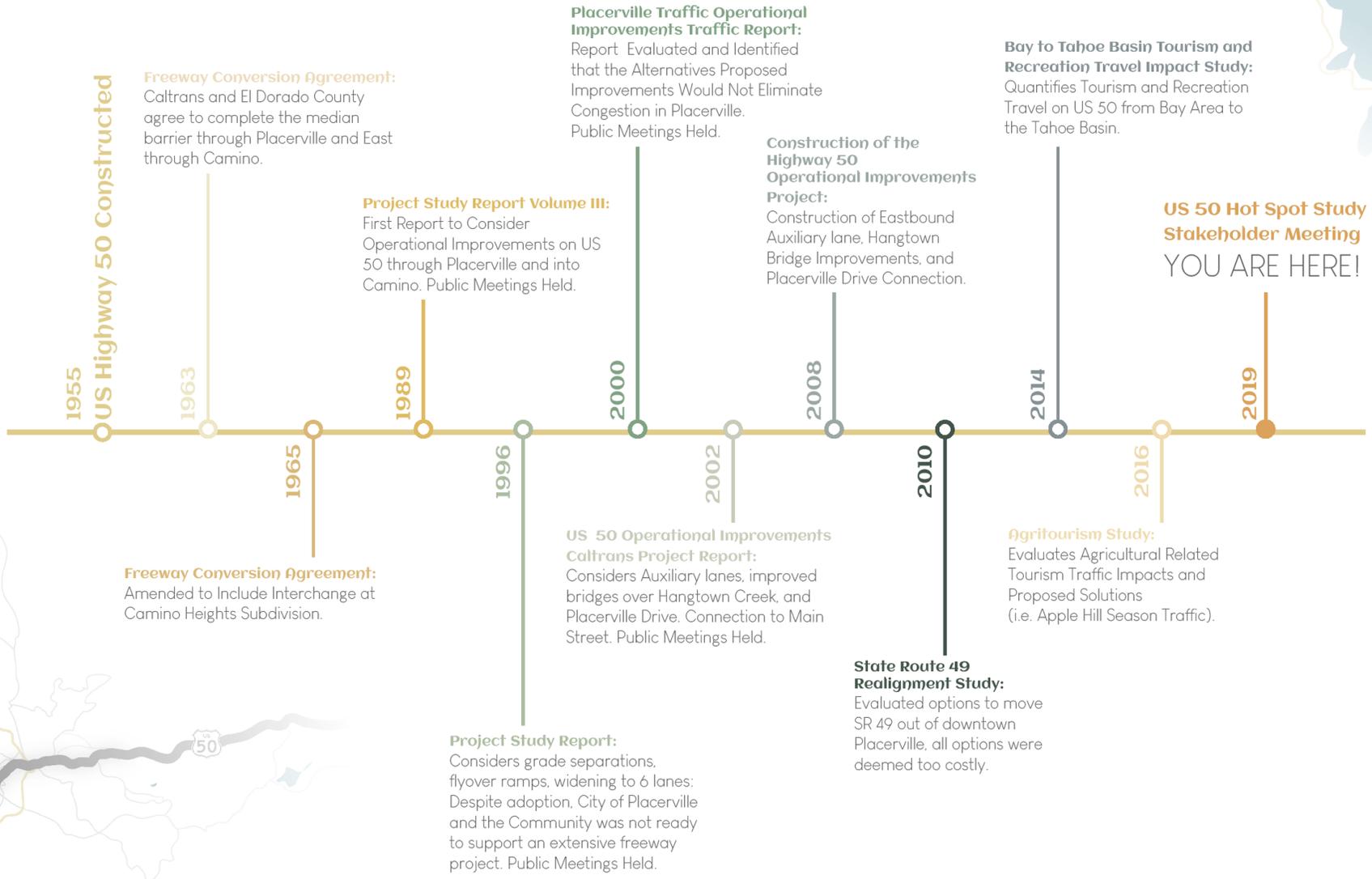
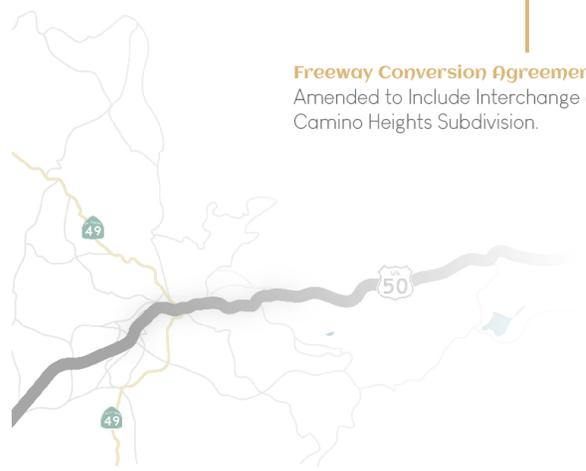
Project Vision Statement

- The District 3 Recreation Travel Hot Spot Travel Management Study will...
 - Identify *state of the practice* adaptive roadway management strategies that
 - are sensitive to the *environment and local context*
 - while improving the *safety and efficiency* of US 50
 - for both *local and regional recreational* travel.

US 50 through Placerville: Existing Conditions and Previous Studies

- What studies have been done to-date?
- What were the results?

US Highway 50 Placerville Corridor Timeline



Discussion: Goals

- What are the stakeholders' values for US 50 through Placerville?
- What are the community characteristics/values that cannot be compromised?

Discussion: Criteria

- Based on the goals discussed, what criteria should be used to evaluate proposed improvements?
- What ideas are we willing to revisit or which ones are no longer appropriate?

Next Steps

The input obtained from the meeting today will be provided to Caltrans and their consultants for inclusion into the overall study

Upcoming outreach opportunities

- Public meeting in July in conjunction with an online questionnaire.

The input obtained through these opportunities will help create the strategies and recommendations.

- The next Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting will be held in late August to present the draft strategies.

Thank you!



**EDCTC US 50 Hot Spot Recreation Study
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting #1**

Wednesday, May 29, 2019 | 10:30 - noon

Feedback Form

Please provide any thoughts, observations, or remaining questions regarding any of the topics discussed today:

1. Overall Project Background and Goals: US 50 Recreation Travel Hot Spot Transportation Management Study: Placerville to South Lake Tahoe

2. Existing Conditions/Previous Studies and Results for US 50 through the Placerville area

3. Goals for US 50 through the Placerville area
