

SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
P. O. BOX 98 – DOWNIEVILLE, CALIFORNIA 95936

COMMISSIONERS

APPOINTEE BY SIERRA COUNTY

LILA HEUER – VICE CHAIR
SHARON DRYDEN
PAUL ROEN
TERRY LEBLANC - ALTERNATE

APPOINTED BY THE COMMISSION

PAUL CUETO

APPOINTED BY CITY OF LOYALTON

SUSAN MCILRAVY – CHAIR
JOY MARKUM
NANCY ROGERS
BILL MERTTON - ALTERNATE

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 19, 2025
10:00 A.M.

305 SOUTH LINCOLN
SIERRAVILLE, CA

This meeting will be open to in-person attendance and available to the public via teleconference.
The public may observe and provide public comments by using the Teams options below:

By Phone: 1-323-892-2486
Access Code: 754942201#
Meeting ID: 284 142 577 88
Passcode: ZddH37

By PC: <https://tinyurl.com/SCTC-meeting>

In compliance with Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and in compliance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, should contact the SCTC office at (530) 289-3201 at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting.

AGENDA

Matters under the jurisdiction of the Commission, and whether or not on the posted agenda, may be addressed by the general public during the Public Comment Opportunity time. No action may be taken, or substantive discussion pursued on matters not on the posted agenda.

- 1. Call to Order and Roll Call and Introductions - 10:00 A.M.**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Approval of Minutes of January 15, 2025**
- 5. Announcements**
- 6. Public Comment Opportunity**
- 7. Transit**
 - A. Report on status of Transit Fund and Transit Services within Sierra County.
 - B. Resolution authorizing the inter-agency transfer of surplus vehicle, 2017 StarCraft to the Sierra Plumas Joint Unified School District.

- C. Resolution approving Section 5311 Transit Grant application and authorizing Executive Director to execute application and related documentation including Programming of Project (POP) and authorizing County Counsel to execute Certifications and Assurances for FY 25/26 transit funding.

8. Overall Work Program

- A. Report on the status of the Overall Work Program budget for the current fiscal year.

9. Audits

- A. Report on the status of the ISCSC FY 23/24 financial audit.

10. Planning, Programming and Monitoring

- A. Agreement for professional services between MGE Engineering, Inc. and the Sierra County Transportation Commission for consulting services related to Planning, Programming & Monitoring for FY 24/25 in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.

11. Regional Transportation Plan

- A. Presentation of draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan.

12. CALTRANS Report

[North Region Projects Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

13. Project Updates

14. Other Transportation Issues

- A. Informational speed zone justification report from the Department of Transportation, District 3 pertaining to Sierraville speed zones.
- B. Update on the speed zone justification report from the Department of Transportation, District 3 pertaining to Sierra City speed zones.

15. Schedule Next Meeting

16. Adjourn

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JERRY GEROW
BILL MERTTON - ALTERNATE

**WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 15, 2025
10:00 A.M.**

**305 SOUTH LINCOLN
SIERRAVILLE, CA**

MINUTES

1. Call to Order:

This meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m. by Chair Roen

Roll Call:

Commissioner Present: Gerow, Heuer, Dryden, Rogers, Roen, McIlravy

Commissioner Absent: Cueto

A Quorum was established.

Staff Present: Bryan Davey, Executive Director; Kaylon Hall, Transportation Planner and Suzanne Smith, Executive Secretary

Also in attendance: Dawson Stroud, Regional Liaison, Caltrans – District 3 (Remote); Sandra Loving, President, Golden Rays Senior Citizens of Sierra County, Inc.; Erik Toraason, Transportation Coordinator, Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County and one member from the public.

2. Pledge of Allegiance: Led by Ms. Smith

3. Approval of Agenda:

Commission Action: Commissioner Dryden motioned to approve the agenda; seconded by Commissioner McIlravy; motion carried by consensus.

4. Approval of Minutes: Commissioner McIlravy motioned to approve the minutes of September 25, 2024; seconded by Commissioner Dryden; motion carried by consensus.

5. Election of 2025 Chair: Commissioner Dryden nominated Commissioner McIlravy to serve as Chair for 2025; seconded by Commissioner Gerow; motion carried by consensus.

6. Election of 2025 Vice Chair: Commissioner Dryden nominated Commissioner Heuer to serve as Vice-Chair for 2025; seconded by Commissioner Roen; motion carried by consensus.

7. Announcements: No announcements were made.

8. Public Comment Opportunity: No public comment was given.

9. Transit

Discussion and report on status of Transit Fund and Transit Services including the mid-year fund estimate and authorization to advise LTF claimants of anticipated area apportionments within Sierra County.

A fund estimate spreadsheet was distributed showing the ongoing tabulations of the Local Transportation Fund (LTF), State Transit Assistance (STA) and State of Good Repair (SGR). Miss Hall reported that the 1/4% Local Sales and Use Tax (LTF) year to date is \$46,602.75, the STA year to date is \$8,553.00 and the SGR year to date is \$1,909.05 noting that the STA/SGR funds are for capital purchases and the FTA fund is for operating expenses.

Miss Hall continued reviewing the fund estimate spreadsheet per the following:

<u>Projected Revenue for FY 24-25</u>		<u>Fund Estimate for FY 25-26</u>	
• SGR	\$7,028	• STA/SGR	\$253,330.69
• STA	\$37,579	• LTF	\$260,101.83
• LTF	\$80,000	• SB125	\$353,240.92
• 5311	\$62,400	• 5311	\$48,000.00
• SB125	\$480,716	• COVID	\$40,000.00
• COVID	\$50,000	Total Operation Funds	\$701,342.75
Total Revenue	\$673,116.00		
• Operations Costs	\$249,743.70		
• SCTC Cost	\$2000.00		
• A87 Costs	\$13,936.21		
• Insurance	\$3,589.00		
• Audit	\$4,000.00		
Total Costs	\$273,268.91		

Miss Hall continued with the transit providers budgets for FY 24-25 noting the remaining contract value for Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County is \$69,388.95 and the remaining contract values for Golden Rays Senior Citizens of Sierra County, Inc. is \$42,918.83. A discussion ensued pertaining to transit budgets and the disbursement of funds to the two (2) transit providers.

Mr. Davey reported that the stolen transit vehicle has been recovered and that we are waiting for a decision from the insurance company to determine whether or not the vehicle will be a total loss. A discussion ensued.

Mid-year review; estimated LTF year-end balance is \$260,101.83.

After a short discussion the Commission advised the LTF claimants (Transit Providers) that the anticipated operating budget for FY 25-26 will be \$270K.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen motioned an anticipated \$270K for area apportionments within Sierra County; seconded by Commissioner Dryden; motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

10. Master Fund Transfer Agreement

Report on the status of the Caltrans 2025-2034 Master Fund Transfer Agreement.

Miss Hall reported that the Master Fund Transfer Agreement (MFTA) was submitted and approved. A fully executed copy has been received from Caltrans Administration, Division of Procurement and

Contracts. Mr. Davey explained that the MFTA is a ten (10) year agreement that allows us to receive money from the state and federal government. Mr. Davey further explained that the MFTA is an overarching agreement that is used with individual yearly agreements for funding through Planning, Programming and Monitoring (PPM), Rural Planning Assistance (RPA), and the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

11. Overall Work Program

Report on the status of the Overall Work Program budget and activities for the current fiscal year. Miss Hall reported that the OWP budget is \$568,965.00 and is comprised of eight (8) Work Elements noting that activity reports are submitted to Caltrans quarterly stating the third quarter reports are complete and will be submitted February 1, 2025. Miss Hall explained that the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan Update is the main item of expense.

Resolution approving an amendment to the FY 24-25 Overall Work Program authorizing the Chair or Executive Director to execute Overall Work Program Agreement 2025-01.

Miss Hall reported that the amendment to the FY 24-25 OWP is necessary to update the current Overall Work Program (OWP) to reflect the new MFTA contract number.

Commission Action: Commission Roen motioned to adopt Resolution 2025-01 approving an amendment to the FY 24-25 OWP authorizing the Chair or Executive Director to execute the Overall Work Program Agreement 2025-01; seconded by Commission Dryden; motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

12. Regional Transportation Plan

Report on the status of the 2025 Regional Transportation Plan update.

Miss Hall reported that she has been working with Green DOT Transportation Solutions updating the 2025 RTP. Green DOT Transportation Solutions submitted an executive summary for review stating a copy is provided in the SCTC agenda packet welcoming any comments or questions for discussion. Miss Hall continued to explain that the Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan has guidelines for transportation funding for the next 5 years regarding projects and what the community would like to see the County doing, noting that the executive summary has a lot of electric vehicles elements to it which will be addressed through the review process. Mr. Davey explained that the RTP is a 20 year plan that gets updated every 5 years. Mr Davey continued that in the review process he has made several comments to the executive summary. Also, several survey's from the public have been received through the public outreach events held at the luncheon provided by the Golden Rays Senior Citizens of Sierra County and Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County. There are also paper surveys at the Downieville Post Office, Loyalton Senior Center, the Department of Public Works office and online. Mr. Davey expressed that the goal is to convey Sierra County's and Loyalton's vision of transportation infrastructure within Sierra County for the next 20 years. Miss Hall will bring back a revised RTP at the next meeting and asked for the Commissioner's to submit comments to her via email.

13. Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program

Approval of letter of support for the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) application to Caltrans FY 2025-26 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program - Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant to develop a county and regional Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Readiness Plan.

Miss Hall explained an application for the Caltrans FY 2024-25 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program was submitted last year and denied. RCRC has requested a letter of support to submit another application for FY 2025-26. A discussion ensued.

Commission Action: Commissioner Dryden motioned to approve the letter of support for the RCRC application to Caltrans FY 2025-26 Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program – Sustainable Communities Competitive Grant to develop a county and regional Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Readiness Plan; seconded by Commissioner Gerow; motion carried by consensus.

14. Audits

Financial Statements & Audit Report for FY 2023-24 for the Golden Rays Senior Citizens of Sierra County, Inc. prepared by Pehling's PnPCPA in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

No audit exceptions have occurred.

Financial Statements together with Independent Auditor's Report for FY 2023-24 for the Sierra County Transit Fund prepared by Smith & Newell, CPSs in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

Mr. Davey reported that this audit is the required annual audit performed by Smith & Newell acknowledging there is an audit exception again this year for the same reason as last year. Mr. Davey explained that although the Commission adopted a resolution lowering the 10% Farebox to 5% the Auditor stated the Farebox has to be 10% of the whole transit program amount. Mr. Davey responded to the Auditor with a statement pertaining to the resolution authorizing the Farebox decrease of 5% to be correct.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen motioned to adopt Resolution 2025-02 accepting the FY 2023-24 audit for the Sierra County Transit Fund and concur with the management response; seconded by Commissioner Heuer; motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

Financial Statements together with Independent Auditor's Report for FY 2023-24 for the Sierra County Transportation Commission prepared by Smith & Newell, CPSs in accordance with Government Auditing Standards.

Mr. Davey reported that this audit is the required annual audit performed by Smith & Newell acknowledging there is an audit exception pertaining to the required 10% Farebox. He explained that as a plan of action Miss Hall and Interdepartmental Fiscal Officer, Miss Carr will review the budget balances in April and assured the Commission there has not been money spent that was more than what has been budgeted.

Commission Action: Commissioner Roen motioned to adopt Resolution 2025-03 accepting the FY 2023-24 audit for the Sierra County Transportation Commission and concur with the management response; seconded by Commissioner Dryden; motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

15. Correspondence

Letter from North State Super Region to the California Energy Commission pertaining to the Clean Transportation Program Investment Plan.

Mr. Davey explained that the Sierra County Transportation Commission is a member of the North State Super Region and this letter is in response to the Investment Plan Update for the Clean Transportation Program.

Email correspondence from the City of Loyalton regarding newly appointed Transportation Commissioners.

Chair McIlravy confirmed that the appointed Transportation Commissioners from the City of Loyalton are as follows:

- Jerry Gerow
- Nancy Rogers
- Susan (Sue) McIlravy
- William (Bill) Mertton - Alternate

16. CALTRANS Report

North Region Projects Viewer (arcgis.com)

Mr. Stroud announced that there is a new project that is programmed for State Route 89. It's a \$22 Million project from the Nevada County Line all the way North to the State Route 49 intersection. The project description is rehabilitate the pavement and drainage systems, construct maintenance pullouts, upgrade signage and guard rails and upgrade 88 facilities along that corridor. The project is supposed to break ground in October 2027. Commissioner Roen requested Mr. Dawson notify the County when a potential contract is awarded. Additionally, Commissioner Roen asked for an update on the step down speed limits on SR89 and SR49 coming into Sierraville. Mr. Stoud stated he has not heard anything from Traffic Operations pertaining to the step down speed signs. Commission Roen reported that there was another accident on the Perry Creek Bridge (box culvert) just west of Sierraville on SR49 stating that currently the bridge (box culvert) has been repaired, noting that it is the second repair this year. Mr. Davey stated that the Commission has been bringing the issue up to Caltrans for many many years as to the constricted location on the highway making a safety issue.

17. Project Updates

Smithneck Road Rehabilitation Project: Mr. Davey reported that the Sierra County Board of Supervisors awarded a contract to R.E.Y. Engineers, Inc. for Professional Engineering and Environmental Services, which is the final design stage. The project is progressing on target.

Plumbago Road Bridge Replacement over Kanaka Creek Project: Mr. Davey reported that there is a bid opening today for the construction phase of the project. Looking forward to awarding a contract soon.

Nevada Street Bridge: Mr. Davey reported that this will be the next bridge project going forward.

Mr. Davey stated that both Gold Lake Road Bridge Replacement projects are complete and finalized. All the current FEMA disaster projects are moving along and progressing.

18. Other Transportation Issues

Informational speed zone justification report from the Department of Transportation, District 3 pertaining to Sierra City speed zones.

Mr. Davey informed the Commission that a traffic survey from Caltrans for Sierra City was performed . The report received was addressed to the Sierra County Board of Supervisors and stated that Caltrans is recommending a speed increase in two locations. Mr. Davey informed the Commission that there are several ways to address the report and asked the Commission for their feedback. A discussion ensued.

19. Schedule Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 19, 2025 at the Sierraville School.

20. Adjourn

Chair McIlravy adjourned the meeting at 11:31 a.m.

Susan McIlravy, Chair
Sierra County Transportation Commission

ATTEST:

Suzanne Smith, Executive Secretary

draft

Sierra County Transportation Commission

Meeting: March 19, 2025

Agenda Item 7 – Transit

- A. Report on status of Transit Fund and Transit Services within Sierra County.

This is a standing agenda item. No action required.

- B. Resolution authorizing the no value inter-agency transfer of surplus vehicle, 2017 StarCraft to the Sierra Plumas Joint Unified School District.

Background: The 2017 StarCraft reached its useful life for transit services. Resolution 2024-16 was adopted September 25, 2024 declaring the vehicle as surplus authorizing the Executive Director to evaluate the vehicle for appropriate transfer, sale or disposal. SPJUSD has accepted SCTC's offer of the vehicle and would like to move forward to have the vehicle inter-agency transferred to the district.

Recommended Motion: Adopt resolution 2025-04 authorizing the inter-agency transfer of surplus vehicle to SPJUSD.

- C. Resolution approving Section 5311 Transit Grant application and authorizing Executive Director to execute application and related documentation including Programming of Project (POP) and authorizing County Counsel to execute Certifications and Assurances for FY 25/26 transit funding.

Background: The Federal Transit Administration makes funding available for purposes of reimbursement of operating expenses for the transit van operations. An authorizing resolution is required for each application cycle. This application is for funds for FY 25/26.

Certifications and Assurances are a pre-application requirement for any entity that is intending to apply for federal funding, essentially affirming to the funding entity that the applicant is in compliance with 24 Federal programs if they are applicable. This also authorizes the Executive Director to execute the Certifications and Assurances, which then must be signed by the applicant's attorney, in this case County Counsel, Rhett Vander Ploeg.

Recommended Motion: Adopt Resolution 2025-05 authorizing the Executive Director to execute Section 5311 Transit Grant application and authorizing County Counsel to execute Certifications and Assurances for FY 25/26 transit funding.

SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**In the Matter of
Authorizing Inter-Agency transfer
Of a Surplus Vehicle**

Resolution 2025-04

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The County owned 2017 StarCraft, License #1517040, VIN 1FDEE3FS1HDC23536 has been previously declared surplus.
2. The Executive Director is hereby authorized to transfer the referenced vehicle to the Sierra Plumas Joint Unified School District.

ADOPTED by the Sierra County Transportation Commission on the 15th day of March, 2025, by the following vote:

AYES: _____
NOES: _____
ABSTAINED: _____
ABSENT: _____

Susan McIlravy, Chair
Sierra County Transportation Commission

ATTEST:

Suzanne Smith, Executive Secretary

SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**IN THE MATTER OF
AUTHORIZING FEDERAL FUNDING APPLICATION
UNDER FTA SECTION 5311 (49 U.S.C. SECTION 5311) WITH
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FOR OPERATING ASSISTANCE FOR FY 25/26**

Resolution 2025-05

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Transportation is authorized to make grants to states through the Federal Transit Administration to support capital/operating assistance projects for non-urbanized public transportation systems under Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act (**FTA C 9040.1F** and **FTA C 9050.1**); and,

WHEREAS, the California Department of Transportation (Department) has been designated by the Governor of the State of California to administer Section 5311 grants for transportation projects for the general public for the rural transit and intercity bus; and,

WHEREAS, the Sierra County Transportation Commission desires to apply for said financial assistance to permit operation of service in Sierra County; and,

WHEREAS, the Sierra County Transportation Commission has, to the maximum extent feasible, coordinated with other transportation providers and users in the region (including social service agencies).

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Sierra County Transportation Commission does hereby authorize Tim H. Beals, Executive Director, to file and execute applications and the Program of Projects on behalf of the Sierra County Transportation Commission with the Department to aid in the financing of capital/operating assistance projects pursuant to Section 5311 of the Federal Transit Act (**FTA C 9040.1F** and **FTA C 9050.1**) as amended.

That Bryan Davey, Executive Director, is authorized to execute and file all certifications of assurances, contracts or agreements or any other document required by the Department.

That Bryan Davey, Executive Director, is authorized to provide additional information as the Department may require in connection with the application for the Section 5311 project.

That Bryan Davey, Executive Director, is authorized to submit and approve requests for reimbursement of funds from the Department for the Section 5311 project.

That Rhetta Vander Ploeg, Sierra County Counsel, is hereby authorized to sign the required certifications and assurances for the current Fiscal Year FTA 5311 Funding.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Sierra County Transportation Commission on the **19th day of March, 2025** by the following vote:

AYES: _____
NOES: _____
ABSTAINED: _____
ABSENT: _____

Susan McIlravy , Chair
Sierra County Transportation Commission

ATTEST:

Suzanne Smith, Executive Secretary

Sierra County Transportation Commission
Meeting: March 19, 2025
Agenda Item 8 – Overall Work Program

- A. Report on the status of the Overall Work Program budget for the current fiscal year.

This is a standing agenda item. No action required.

Sierra County Transportation Commission
Meeting: March 19, 2025
Agenda Item 9 – Audits

A. Report on the status of the ISCSC FY23/24 financial audit.

No action required.

Sierra County Transportation Commission

Meeting: March 15, 2025

Agenda Item 10 – Planning, Programming & Monitoring

- A. Agreement for professional services between MGE Engineering, Inc. and the Sierra County Transportation Commission to for consulting services related to Planning, Programming & Monitoring for FY 24/25 in an amount not to exceed \$25,000.

Background: This is an annual agreement for consulting services related to PPM. Scope of services and duties include development of preliminary project information, assistance with Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP), preparation of Project Study Reports (PSR), assistance with matters related to programming and funding requests to the California Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and other state/federal agencies.

Recommended Motion: Approve Agreement 2025-02 with MGE Engineering, Inc. for consulting services related to Planning, Programming & Monitoring for FY 24/25.

**AGREEMENT FOR
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES
Planning, Programming & Monitoring – MGE Engineering, Inc.**

THIS AGREEMENT for Professional Services (“Agreement”) is made as of the Agreement Date set forth below by and between the Sierra County Transportation Commission (SCTC) of the County of Sierra, a political subdivision of the State of California (“the SCTC”), and

MGE Engineering, Inc.
“CONTRACTOR”

In consideration of the services to be rendered, the sums to be paid, and each and every covenant and condition contained herein, the parties hereto agree as follows:

OPERATIVE PROVISIONS

1. SERVICES.

The CONTRACTOR shall provide those services described in Attachment “A”, Provision A-1. CONTRACTOR shall provide said services at the time, place and in the manner specified in Attachment “A”, Provisions A-2 through A-3.

2. TERM.

Commencement Date: February 6, 2025

Termination Date: June 30, 2025

3. PAYMENT.

SCTC shall pay CONTRACTOR for services rendered pursuant to this Agreement at the time and in the amount set forth in Attachment “B”. The payment specified in Attachment “B” shall be the only payment made to CONTRACTOR for services rendered pursuant to this Agreement. CONTRACTOR shall submit all billings for said services to SCTC in the manner specified in Attachment “B”.

4. FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND OTHER MATERIALS AND OBLIGATIONS OF SCTC.

CONTRACTOR shall, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all facilities, equipment, and other materials which may be required for furnishing services pursuant to this Agreement, except as provided in this paragraph. SCTC shall furnish CONTRACTOR only those facilities, equipment, and other materials and shall perform those obligations listed in Attachment “A.4”.

5. ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS.

Those additional provisions unique to this Agreement are set forth in Attachment “C”.

6. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

The general provisions set forth in Attachment “D” are part of this Agreement. Any inconsistency between said general provisions and any other terms or conditions of this Agreement shall be controlled by the other terms or conditions insofar as the latter are inconsistent with the general provisions.

7. DESIGNATED REPRESENTATIVES.

Executive Director, Bryan Davey is the designated representative of the SCTC and will administer this Agreement for the SCTC. H. Fred Huang is the authorized representative for CONTRACTOR. Changes in designated representatives shall occur only by advance written notice to the other party.

8. ATTACHMENTS.

All attachments referred to herein are attached hereto and by this reference incorporated herein. Attachments include:

- Attachment A - Services
- Attachment B - Payment
- Attachment C - Additional Provisions
- Attachment D - General Provisions
- Attachment E - Form of Invoice

9. AGREEMENT DATE. The Agreement Date is February 6, 2025.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement on the day here first above written.

SCTC
SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CONTRACTOR

 BRYAN DAVEY
 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

 H. FRED HUANG
 MGE ENGINEERING, INC.

ATTEST:

 SUZANNE SMITH
 EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

ATTACHMENT A**A.1 SCOPE OF SERVICES AND DUTIES.**

The services to be provided by CONTRACTOR and the scope of CONTRACTOR's duties include the following. Provide engineering and other technical support to the Sierra County Transportation Commission (SCTC) including:

- Development of preliminary project information for use in development priorities;
- Assistance with the development of the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP);
- Preparation of Project Study Reports (PSR);
- Assistance with preparation, submission and processing of programming and funding requests to the California State Transportation Commission, California Department of Transportation, and other state/federal agencies;
- Attendance at SCTC and other meetings as requested by the SCTC Executive Director; and
- Other engineering and professional services as requested by the SCTC Executive Director.

A.2. TIME SERVICES RENDERED.

February 6, 2025 through June 30, 2025

A.3. MANNER SERVICES ARE TO BE PERFORMED.

As an independent contractor, CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for providing services and fulfilling obligations hereunder in a professional manner. SCTC shall not control the manner of performance.

A.4. FACILITIES FURNISHED BY SCTC.

None

ATTACHMENT B

PAYMENT

SCTC shall pay CONTRACTOR as follows:

B.1 BASE CONTRACT FEE.

SCTC shall pay CONTRACTOR a contract fee not to exceed **twenty-five thousand dollars and no cents (\$25,000.00)**, on a time and materials basis in accordance with fee schedule attached as Exhibit 1.

CONTRACTOR shall submit requests for payment after completion of services or no later than the tenth (10th) day of the month following provision of services. Request for payment shall be substantially in the form of the invoice attached hereto as Attachment E. Payment shall be made within thirty (30) days after the Invoice is approved by the SCTC Contract Administrator. In no event shall total compensation paid to CONTRACTOR under this Provision B.1 exceed **\$25,000.00** without an amendment to this Agreement approved by the Sierra County Transportation Commission.

B.2 MILEAGE. Included in base proposal

B.3 TRAVEL COSTS. Included in base proposal

B.4 AUTHORIZATION REQUIRED.

Services performed by CONTRACTOR and not authorized in this Agreement shall not be paid for by SCTC. Payment for additional services shall be made to CONTRACTOR by SCTC if, and only if, this Agreement is amended in writing by both parties in advance of performing additional services.

B.5 SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES. SCTC shall reimburse CONTRACTOR for direct expenses such as sub-contractors, travel by commercial carrier, delivery, copying and reproduction costs at actual cost.

B.6 MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT. The maximum amount payable to CONTRACTOR under this Agreement shall not exceed the following:

B.1	Base Contract Fee	\$25,000
B.2	Mileage	Included
B.3	Travel Costs	Included
B.4	Authorization Required	0
B.5	Special Circumstances	0
	MAXIMUM CONTRACT AMOUNT	\$25,000

ATTACHMENT C
ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS

[NONE]

ATTACHMENT D**GENERAL PROVISIONS**

D.1 INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR. For all purposes arising out of this Agreement, CONTRACTOR shall be an independent contractor and CONTRACTOR and each and every employee, agent, servant, partner, and shareholder of CONTRACTOR (collectively referred to as “The Contractor”) shall not be, for any purpose of this Agreement, an employee of SCTC. Furthermore, this Agreement shall not under any circumstance be construed or considered to be a joint powers agreement as described in *Government Code* Section 6000, et seq., or otherwise. As an independent contractor, the following shall apply:

D.1.1 CONTRACTOR shall determine the method, details and means of performing the services to be provided by CONTRACTOR as described in this Agreement.

D.1.2 CONTRACTOR shall be responsible to SCTC only for the requirements and results specified by this Agreement and, except as specifically provided in this Agreement, shall not be subject to SCTC’s control with respect to the physical actions or activities of CONTRACTOR in fulfillment of the requirements of this Agreement.

D.1.3 CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for its own operating costs and expenses, property and income taxes, workers’ compensation insurance and any other costs and expenses in connection with performance of services under this Agreement.

D.1.4 CONTRACTOR is not, and shall not be, entitled to receive from or through SCTC, and SCTC shall not provide or be obligated to provide the CONTRACTOR with workers’ compensation coverage, unemployment insurance coverage or any other type of employee or worker insurance or benefit coverage required or provided by any federal, state or local law or regulation for, or normally afforded to, any employee of SCTC.

D.1.5 CONTRACTOR shall not be entitled to have SCTC withhold or pay, and SCTC shall not withhold or pay, on behalf of the CONTRACTOR any tax or money relating to the Social Security Old Age Pension Program, Social Security Disability Program or any other type of pension, annuity or disability program required or provided by any federal, state or local law or regulation for, or normally afforded to, an employee of SCTC.

D.1.6 CONTRACTOR shall not be entitled to participate in, or receive any benefit from, or make any claim against any SCTC fringe benefit program including, but not limited to, SCTC’s pension plan, medical and health care plan, dental plan, life insurance plan, or other type of benefit program, plan or coverage designated for, provided to, or offered to SCTC’s employees.

D.1.7 SCTC shall not withhold or pay on behalf of CONTRACTOR any federal, state or local tax including, but not limited to, any personal income tax owed by CONTRACTOR.

D.1.8 CONTRACTOR is, and at all times during the term of this Agreement shall represent and conduct itself as an independent contractor and not as an employee of SCTC.

D.1.9 CONTRACTOR shall not have the authority, express or implied, to act on behalf of, bind or obligate the SCTC in any way without the written consent of the SCTC.

D.2 LICENSES, PERMITS, ETC. CONTRACTOR represents and warrants to SCTC that it has all licenses, permits, qualifications, and approvals of whatsoever nature which are legally required for

CONTRACTOR to practice its profession. CONTRACTOR represents and warrants to SCTC that CONTRACTOR shall, at its sole cost and expense, keep in effect or obtain at all times during the term of this Agreement any licenses, permits, and approvals which are legally required for CONTRACTOR to practice its profession at the time the services are performed.

D.3 CHANGE IN STATUTES OR REGULATIONS. If there is a change of statutes or regulations applicable to the subject matter of this Agreement, both parties agree to be governed by the new provisions, unless either party gives notice to terminate pursuant to the terms of this Agreement.

D.4 TIME. CONTRACTOR shall devote such time to the performance of services pursuant to this Agreement as may be reasonably necessary for the satisfactory performance of CONTRACTOR's obligations pursuant to this Agreement. Neither party shall be considered in default of this Agreement to the extent performance is prevented or delayed by any cause, present or future, which is beyond the reasonable control of the party.

D.5 INSURANCE.

D.5.1 Prior to rendering services provided by the terms and conditions of this Agreement, CONTRACTOR shall acquire and maintain during the term of this Agreement insurance coverage through and with an insurer acceptable to SCTC, naming the SCTC and SCTC's officers, employees, agents and independent contractors as additional insured (hereinafter referred to as "the insurance"). The insurance shall contain the coverage indicated by the checked items below.

D.5.1.1 Comprehensive general liability insurance including comprehensive public liability insurance with minimum coverage of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) per occurrence and with not less than Five Million Dollars (\$5,000,000) aggregate; CONTRACTOR shall insure both SCTC and CONTRACTOR against any liability arising under or related to this Agreement.

D.5.1.2 During the term of this Agreement, CONTRACTOR shall maintain in full force and effect a policy of professional errors and omissions insurance with policy limits of not less than One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) per incident and One Million Dollars (\$1,000,000) annual aggregate, with deductible or self-insured portion not to exceed Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500).

D.5.1.3 Comprehensive automobile liability insurance with minimum coverage of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) per occurrence and with not less than Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) on reserve in the aggregate, with combined single limit including owned, non-owned and hired vehicles.

D.5.1.4 Workers' Compensation Insurance coverage for all CONTRACTOR employees and other persons for whom CONTRACTOR is responsible to provide such insurance coverage, as provided by Division 4 and 4.5 of the *Labor Code*.

D.5.2 The limits of insurance herein shall not limit the liability of the CONTRACTOR hereunder.

D.5.3 In respect to any insurance herein, if the aggregate limit available becomes less than that required above, other excess insurance shall be acquired and maintained immediately. For the purpose of any insurance term of this Agreement, "aggregate limit available" is defined as the total policy limits available for all claims made during the policy period.

D.5.4 The insurance shall include an endorsement that no cancellation or material change adversely

affecting any coverage provided by the insurance may be made until twenty (20) days after written notice is delivered to SCTC.

D.5.5 The insurance policy forms, endorsements and insurer(s) issuing the insurance shall be satisfactory to SCTC at its sole and absolute discretion. The amount of any deductible payable by the insured shall be subject to the prior approval of the SCTC and the SCTC, as a condition of its approval, may require such proof of the adequacy of CONTRACTOR's financial resources as it may see fit.

D.5.6 Prior to CONTRACTOR rendering services provided by this Agreement, and immediately upon acquiring additional insurance, CONTRACTOR shall deliver a certificate of insurance describing the insurance coverages and endorsements to:

County of Sierra
Auditor/Risk Manager
P.O. Drawer 425
Downieville, CA 95936

D.5.7 CONTRACTOR shall not render services under the terms and conditions of this Agreement unless each type of insurance coverage and endorsement is in effect and CONTRACTOR has delivered the certificate(s) of insurance to SCTC as previously described. If CONTRACTOR shall fail to procure and maintain said insurance, SCTC may, but shall not be required to, procure and maintain the same, and the premiums of such insurance shall be paid by CONTRACTOR to SCTC upon demand. The policies of insurance provided herein which are to be provided by CONTRACTOR shall be for a period of not less than one year, it being understood and agreed that twenty (20) days prior to the expiration of any policy of insurance, CONTRACTOR will deliver to SCTC a renewal or new policy to take the place of the policy expiring.

D.5.8 SCTC shall have the right to request such further coverages and/or endorsements on the insurance as SCTC deems necessary, at CONTRACTOR's expense. The amounts, insurance policy forms, endorsements and insurer(s) issuing the insurance shall be satisfactory to SCTC in its sole and absolute discretion.

D.5.9 Any subcontractor(s), independent contractor(s) or any type of agent(s) performing or hired to perform any term or condition of this Agreement on behalf of CONTRACTOR, as may be allowed by this Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the "SECONDARY PARTIES"), shall comply with each term and condition of this Section D.5 entitled "INSURANCE". Furthermore, CONTRACTOR shall be responsible for the SECONDARY PARTIES' acts and satisfactory performance of the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

D.6 INDEMNITY. CONTRACTOR shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless SCTC, its elected and appointed councils, boards, commissions, officers, agents, and employees from any liability for damage or claims for damage for any economic loss or personal injury, including death, as well as for property damage, which may arise from the intentional or negligent acts or omissions of CONTRACTOR in the performance of services rendered under this Agreement by CONTRACTOR, or any of CONTRACTOR's officers, agents, employees, contractors, or subcontractors.

D.7 CONTRACTOR NOT AGENT. Except as SCTC may specify in writing, CONTRACTOR shall have no authority, express or implied, to act on behalf of SCTC in any capacity whatsoever as an agent. CONTRACTOR shall have no authority, express or implied, pursuant to this Agreement to bind SCTC to any obligation whatsoever.

D.8 ASSIGNMENT PROHIBITED. CONTRACTOR may not assign any right or obligation pursuant

to this Agreement. Any attempted or purported assignment of any right or obligation pursuant to this Agreement shall be void and of no legal effect.

D.9 PERSONNEL. CONTRACTOR shall assign only competent personnel to perform services pursuant to this Agreement. In the event that SCTC, in its sole discretion at any time during the term of this Agreement, desires the removal of any person or persons assigned by CONTRACTOR to perform services pursuant to this Agreement, CONTRACTOR shall remove any such person immediately upon receiving written notice from SCTC of its desire for removal of such person or persons.

D.10 STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE. CONTRACTOR shall perform all services required pursuant to this Agreement in the manner and according to the standards observed by a competent practitioner of the profession in which CONTRACTOR is engaged. All products of whatsoever nature which CONTRACTOR delivers to SCTC pursuant to this Agreement shall be prepared in a first class and workmanlike manner and shall conform to the standards of quality normally observed by a person practicing in CONTRACTOR's profession.

D.11 POSSESSORY INTEREST. The parties to this Agreement recognize that certain rights to property may create a "possessory interest", as those words are used in the *California Revenue and Taxation Code* (107). For all purposes of compliance by SCTC with Section 107.6 of the *California Revenue and Taxation Code*, this recital shall be deemed full compliance by the SCTC. All questions of initial determination of possessory interest and valuation of such interest, if any, shall be the responsibility of the SCTC Assessor and the contracting parties hereto. A taxable possessory interest may be created by this, if created, and the party in whom such an interest is vested will be subject to the payment of property taxes levied on such an interest.

D.12 TAXES. CONTRACTOR hereby grants to the SCTC the authority to deduct from any payments to CONTRACTOR any SCTC imposed taxes, fines, penalties and related charges which are delinquent at the time such payments under this Agreement are due to CONTRACTOR.

D.13 TERMINATION. SCTC shall have the right to terminate this Agreement at any time by giving notice in writing of such termination to CONTRACTOR. In the event SCTC gives notice of termination, CONTRACTOR shall immediately cease rendering service upon receipt of such written notice and the following shall apply:

D.13.1.1 CONTRACTOR shall deliver to SCTC copies of all writings prepared by it pursuant to this Agreement. The term "writings" shall be construed to mean and include: handwriting, typewriting, printing, photo stating, photographing, computer storage medium (tapes, disks, diskettes, etc.) and every other means of recording upon any tangible thing, and form of communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds, or symbols, or combinations thereof.

D.13.1.2 SCTC shall pay CONTRACTOR the reasonable value of services rendered by CONTRACTOR to the date of termination pursuant to this Agreement not to exceed the amount documented by CONTRACTOR and approved by SCTC as work accomplished to date; provided, however, that in no event shall any payment hereunder exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000). Further provided, however, SCTC shall not in any manner be liable for lost profits which might have been made by CONTRACTOR had CONTRACTOR completed the services required by this Agreement. In this regard, CONTRACTOR shall furnish to SCTC such financial information as in the judgment of the SCTC is necessary to determine the reasonable value of the services rendered by CONTRACTOR. In the event of a dispute as to the reasonable value of the services rendered by CONTRACTOR, the decision of the SCTC shall be final. The foregoing is cumulative and does not affect any right or remedy which SCTC may have in law or equity.

D.13.2 CONTRACTOR may terminate its services under this Agreement upon thirty (30) working days written notice to the SCTC, without liability for damages, if CONTRACTOR is not compensated according to the provisions of the Agreement or upon any other material breach of the Agreement by SCTC, provided that CONTRACTOR has first provided SCTC with a written notice of any alleged breach, specifying the nature of the alleged breach and providing not less than ten (10) working days within which the SCTC may cure the alleged breach.

D.14 OWNERSHIP OF INFORMATION. All professional and technical information developed under this Agreement and all work sheets, reports, and related data shall become and/or remain the property of SCTC, and CONTRACTOR agrees to deliver reproducible copies of such documents to SCTC on completion of the services hereunder. The SCTC agrees to indemnify and hold CONTRACTOR harmless from any claim arising out of reuse of the information for other than this project.

D.15 WAIVER. A waiver by any party of any breach of any term, covenant or condition herein contained or a waiver of any right or remedy of such party available hereunder at law or in equity shall not be deemed to be a waiver of any subsequent breach of the same or any other term, covenant or condition herein contained or of any continued or subsequent right to the same right or remedy. No party shall be deemed to have made any such waiver unless it is in writing and signed by the party so waiving.

D.16 COMPLETENESS OF INSTRUMENT. This Agreement, together with its specific references and attachments, constitutes all of the agreements, understandings, representations, conditions, warranties and covenants made by and between the parties hereto. Unless set forth herein, neither party shall be liable for any representations made, express or implied.

D.17 SUPERSEDES PRIOR AGREEMENTS. It is the intention of the parties hereto that this Agreement shall supersede any prior agreements, discussions, commitments, representations, or agreements, written or oral, between the parties hereto.

D.18 ATTORNEY'S FEES. If any action at law or in equity, including an action for declaratory relief, is brought to enforce or interpret provisions of this Agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable attorney's fees, which may be set by the Court in the same action or in a separate action brought for that purpose, in addition to any other relief to which such party may be entitled.

D.19 MINOR AUDITOR REVISION. In the event the Sierra SCTC Auditor's office finds a mathematical discrepancy between the terms of the Agreement and actual invoices or payments, provided that such discrepancy does not exceed 1% of the Agreement amount, the Auditor's office may make the adjustment in any payment or payments without requiring an amendment to the Agreement to provide for such adjustment. Should the SCTC or the CONTRACTOR disagree with such adjustment, they reserve the right to contest such adjustment and/or to request corrective amendment.

D.20 CAPTIONS. The captions of this Agreement are for convenience in reference only and the words contained therein shall in no way be held to explain, modify, amplify or aid in the interpretation, construction or meaning of the provisions of this Agreement.

D.21 DEFINITIONS. Unless otherwise provided in this Agreement, or unless the context otherwise requires, the following definitions and rules of construction shall apply herein.

D.21.1 NUMBER AND GENDER. In this Agreement, the neuter gender includes the feminine and masculine, the singular includes the plural, and the word "person" includes corporations, partnerships, firms or associations, wherever the context so requires.

D.21.2 MANDATORY AND PERMISSIVE. "Shall" and "will" and "agrees" are mandatory.

“May” is permissive.

D.22 TERM INCLUDES EXTENSIONS. All references to the term of this Agreement or the Agreement Term shall include any extensions of such term.

D.23 SUCCESSORS AND ASSIGNS. All representations, covenants and warranties specifically set forth in this Agreement, by or on behalf of, or for the benefit of any or all of the parties hereto, shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of such party, its successors and assigns.

D.24 MODIFICATION. No modification or waiver of any provisions of this Agreement or its attachments shall be effective unless such waiver or modification shall be in writing, signed by all parties, and then shall be effective only for the period and on the condition, and for the specific instance for which given.

D.25 COUNTERPARTS. This Agreement may be executed simultaneously and in several counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

D.26 OTHER DOCUMENTS. The parties agree that they shall cooperate in good faith to accomplish the object of this Agreement and, to that end, agree to execute and deliver such other and further instruments and documents as may be necessary and convenient to the fulfillment of these purposes.

D.27 PARTIAL INVALIDITY. If any term, covenant, condition or provision of this Agreement is held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, void or unenforceable, the remainder of the provision and/or provisions shall remain in full force and effect and shall in no way be affected, impaired or invalidated.

D.28 VENUE. It is agreed by the parties hereto that unless otherwise expressly waived by them, any action brought to enforce any of the provisions hereof or for declaratory relief hereunder shall be filed and remain in a court of competent jurisdiction in the County of Sierra, State of California.

D.29 CONTROLLING LAW. The validity, interpretation and performance of this Agreement shall be controlled by and construed under the laws of the State of California.

D.30 CALIFORNIA TORT CLAIMS ACT. Notwithstanding any term or condition of the Agreement, the provisions, and related provisions, of the California Tort Claims Act, Division 3.6 of the *Government Code*, are not waived by SCTC and shall apply to any claim against SCTC arising out of any acts or conduct under the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

D.31 TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. Time is of the essence of this Agreement and each covenant and term herein.

D.32 AUTHORITY. All parties to this Agreement warrant and represent that they have the power and authority to enter into this Agreement in the names, titles and capacities herein stated and on behalf of any entities, persons, estates or firms represented or purported to be represented by such entity(s), person(s), estate(s) or firm(s) and that all formal requirements necessary or required by any state and/or federal law in order to enter into this Agreement are in full compliance. Further, by entering into this Agreement, neither party hereto shall have breached the terms or conditions of any other contract or agreement to which such party is obligated, which such breach would have a material effect hereon.

D.33 CORPORATE AUTHORITY. If CONTRACTOR is a corporation or public agency, each individual executing this Agreement on behalf of said corporation or public agency represents and warrants that he or she is duly authorized to execute and deliver this Agreement on behalf of said corporation, in accordance with a duly adopted resolution of the Board of Directors of said corporation or in accordance with the bylaws of said corporation or Board or Commission of said public agency, and that this Agreement is

binding upon said corporation or public entity in accordance with its terms. If CONTRACTOR is a corporation, CONTRACTOR shall, within thirty (30) days after execution of this Agreement, deliver to SCTC a certified copy of a resolution of the Board of Directors of said corporation authorizing or ratifying the execution of this Agreement.

D.34 CONFLICT OF INTEREST.

D.34.1 LEGAL COMPLIANCE. CONTRACTOR agrees at all times in performance of this Agreement to comply with the law of the State of California regarding conflicts of interest, including, but not limited to, Article 4 of Chapter 1, Division 4, Title 1 of the *California Government Code*, commencing with Section 1090, and Chapter 7 of Title 9 of said Code, commencing with Section 87100, including regulations promulgated by the California Fair Political Practices Commission.

D.34.2 ADVISEMENT. CONTRACTOR agrees that if any facts come to its attention which raise any questions as to the applicability of this law, it will immediately inform the SCTC designated representative and provide all information needed for resolution of the question.

D.34.3 ADMONITION. Without limitation of the covenants in subparagraphs D.34.1 and D.34.2, CONTRACTOR is admonished hereby as follows:

The statutes, regulations and laws referenced in this provision D.34 include, but are not limited to, a prohibition against any public officer, including CONTRACTOR for this purpose, from making any decision on behalf of SCTC in which such officer has a direct or indirect financial interest. A violation occurs if the public officer influences or participates in any SCTC decision which has the potential to confer any pecuniary benefit on CONTRACTOR or any business firm in which CONTRACTOR has an interest of any type, with certain narrow exceptions.

D.35 NONDISCRIMINATION. During the performance of this Agreement, CONTRACTOR shall not unlawfully discriminate against any employee of the CONTRACTOR or of the SCTC or applicant for employment or for services or any member of the public because of race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, marital status, age or sex. CONTRACTOR shall ensure that in the provision of services under this Agreement, its employees and applicants for employment and any member of the public are free from such discrimination. CONTRACTOR shall comply with the provisions of the Fair Employment and Housing Act (*Government Code* Section 12900 et seq.). The applicable regulations of the Fair Employment Housing Commission implementing *Government Code* Section 12900, set forth in Chapter 5, Division 4 of Title 2 of the California *Administrative Code* are incorporated into this Agreement by reference and made a part hereof as if set forth in full. CONTRACTOR shall also abide by the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all amendments thereto, and all administrative rules and regulation issued pursuant to said Act. CONTRACTOR shall give written notice of its obligations under this clause to any labor agreement. CONTRACTOR shall include the non-discrimination and compliance provision of this paragraph in all subcontracts to perform work under this Agreement.

D.36 JOINT AND SEVERAL LIABILITY. If any party consists of more than one person or entity, the liability of each person or entity signing this Agreement shall be joint and several.

D.37 TAXPAYER I.D. NUMBER. SCTC shall not disburse any payments to CONTRACTOR pursuant to this Agreement until CONTRACTOR supplies the latter's Taxpayer I.D. Number or Social Security Number (as required on the line under CONTRACTOR's signature on page 2 of this Agreement).

D.38 NOTICES. All notices and demands of any kind which either party may require or desire to serve on the other in connection with this Agreement must be served in writing either by personal service or by

registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall be deposited in the United States Mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, and addressed to the party so to be served as follows:

If to "SCTC":
Bryan Davey
Sierra County Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 98
Downieville, CA 95936

With a copy to:
Sierra County Counsel
SCTC of Sierra
Post Office 98
Downieville, CA 95936

If to "CONTRACTOR":
H. Fred Huang, P.E.
MGE Engineering, Inc.
7415 Greenhaven Drive, Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95831-3583

County of Sierra
Department of Transportation
Post Office Box 98
Downieville, California 95936

Our File No. _____

Re: _____

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT FOR

BALANCE FORWARD \$

TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Staff</u>	<u>Description of Service</u>	<u>Hrs</u>	<u>Rate</u>	<u>Total</u>
-------------	--------------	-------------------------------	------------	-------------	--------------

Total \$ _____

HOURLY BILLING RATES

MGE Engineering, Inc.

Effective 1/1/25 – 12/31/25

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Rate</u>
Principal Engineer	\$370
Project Manager	\$330
Supervising Engineer	\$310
Geologist/Geotechnical Engineer	\$280
Senior Engineer II	\$280
Senior Engineer I	\$260
Resident Engineer/Structures Rep.	\$243
Associate Engineer	\$215
Construction Inspector	\$225
Assistant Engineer	\$180
Junior Engineer	\$140
CADD Technician III	\$200
CADD Technician II	\$170
CADD Technician I	\$140
Admin Assistant	\$150

Direct Costs:

Reproduction and Delivery	At Cost
Auto Mileage	Federal Rate (\$0.70/mile)
Per Diem	CT Travel Guide

Note: Above rates are subject to up to 5% escalation per year over the next 3 years beginning January 1st of each calendar year.

Sierra County Transportation Commission
Meeting: March 19, 2025
Agenda Item 11 – Regional Transportation Plan

A. Presentation of draft 2025 Regional Transportation Plan.

No action required.

Draft for internal review

2025 Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan

Admin Draft – March 2025

Prepared by:

Green DOT Transportation Solutions

Prepared for:

Sierra County Transportation Commission

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ADMIN DRAFT

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0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

0.1. INTRODUCTION

The Sierra County Transportation Commission (SCTC) is the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Sierra County, responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of transportation planning within the region. As a rural county nestled in the northern Sierra Nevada, Sierra County's transportation network serves diverse needs, including local travel, tourism, and emergency services. SCTC's mission is to ensure a transportation system that is safe, efficient, and accessible to all residents while preserving the county's natural environment.

Federal law (Title 23 CFR 450.300, Subpart B) and California Government Code Section 65080 mandate RTPAs to prepare long-range transportation plans to guide transportation investments over a minimum 20-year horizon. The 2025 Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) serves as a roadmap for addressing current transportation challenges and preparing for future needs. By updating the RTP every four to five years, Sierra County remains eligible for critical state and federal funding programs.

The 2025 RTP builds on the foundation of the 2020 plan, incorporating updated data and addressing new priorities, such as climate resilience, equity, and emerging technologies. It considers all modes of transportation, including roadways, public transit, active transportation, freight, aviation, and emergency routes. Developed through collaboration with Caltrans, Tribal governments, community stakeholders, and the public, the RTP aligns with state and federal goals while addressing Sierra County's unique rural context.

Key Elements of the RTP:

- **Policy Element:** Defines regional goals and policies, addressing safety, equity, sustainability, and economic vitality.
- **Action Element:** Outlines prioritized projects across transportation modes to meet the county's needs.
- **Financial Element:** Identifies available funding sources and financial strategies to support the planned projects.

0.2. OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL VISION

Sierra County envisions a transportation network that fosters connectivity, supports economic growth, and preserves its natural beauty. This vision aligns with state and federal initiatives such as California’s Climate Action Plan for Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) and the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Goals:

1. Maintain and enhance the safety and reliability of roads and bridges.
2. Expand multimodal transportation options to promote sustainability.
3. Support tourism and recreation while preserving natural resources.
4. Strengthen resilience to climate impacts, such as wildfires and extreme weather.

Legislative initiatives like California’s Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) provide funding for transportation maintenance and improvements, which are vital for addressing the county’s infrastructure challenges. Between 2021 and 2024, Sierra County has received over \$4.7 million in SB1 allocations for road maintenance and active transportation projects.

0.3. OVERVIEW OF ACTION ELEMENT

The Action Element identifies over 120 transportation projects, categorized by mode: roadways, bridges, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, aviation, and freight movement. Notable projects include:

- **Roadway Improvements:** Reconstruction of portions of State Route 49 to address safety concerns and enhance connectivity. This includes paving upgrades, signage improvements, and measures to mitigate winter weather impacts. In addition to Caltrans-maintained highways critical to the community, the County oversees and maintains these key roadways:
 - County Route A23 (Beckwourth-Calpine Road): A major county road connecting the Sierra Valley area to Highway 70. Often called Beckwourth-Calpine Road, this route links Calpine/Sattley in Sierra County to Beckwourth in Plumas County. It serves as an important east-west connector across Sierra Valley (used as a detour when State Highway 70 is closed) and is maintained by the county.

- County Route A24 (Loyalton to Beckwourth Road): A county road running from Loyalton (on SR 49) north/east to Hawley (on SR 70) at the Sierra–Plumas County line. This road provides another link between eastern Sierra County and Hwy 70. It is maintained by Sierra County and is outside the state highway system (though it connects those state routes).
- Hennes Pass Road: A historic trans-Sierra route now maintained as a county road. Hennes Pass Road runs west–east across the county (roughly from the Little Truckee Summit area on SR 89 toward the Nevada state line near Verdi). Much of it is a rural mountain road, and Sierra County maintains the passable portions within the county. It remains an important rural connector and recreation route.
- Stampede Dam Road: A county road providing access to Stampede Reservoir and surrounding areas. It extends north from the Interstate 80/Boca area into Sierra County toward Stampede Dam. Sierra County maintains the segment of Stampede Dam Road within its boundaries (connecting to Dog Valley Road (County Road S-261) and the Nevada County line). This road is critical for access to the reservoir and forest lands, and the county coordinates improvements on its portion of the roadway.
- Gold Lake Road (Gold Lake Highway): A county-maintained mountain road connecting Highway 49 at Bassetts to the Gold Lakes Basin and northward toward Graeagle. Sierra County is responsible for the portion of Gold Lake Road within its borders. This scenic road provides year-round access to recreation areas (Gold Lake, Sardine Lake, etc.) and serves as a local connector between Sierra and Plumas counties.
- **Active Transportation:** Expansion of recreational bicycle trails throughout the County, supporting both local mobility and tourism. These trails will integrate with existing mountain biking infrastructure to create safer and more accessible routes for cyclists.
- **Public Transit:** Upgrades to Sierra County Transit Services, including zero-emission vehicles to reduce environmental impacts. Planned improvements include the introduction of more frequent routes and improved accessibility for seniors and individuals with disabilities.

- **Bridge Rehabilitation:** Updating aging bridge structures to ensure safety and reliability. This includes work on key bridges along major county routes, addressing structural integrity and flood resilience.

The Action Element also emphasizes the importance of integrated transportation solutions that connect various modes, such where feasible, and prioritizing recreational trail activities and tourism. Figure 0-1 provides a comprehensive breakdown of project needs and funding allocations by mode, highlighting the county's commitment to creating a cohesive transportation network.

Figure 0-1: Percentage of Projects by Mode

Mode	Percentage of Projects
Roadways	40%
Bridges	25%
Public Transit	15%
Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure	10%
Aviation	5%
Freight Movement	5%

Figure 0-2: Percentage of Funding Needs by Mode

Mode	Percentage of Funding Needs
Roadways	50%
Bridges	30%
Public Transit	10%
Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure	5%
Aviation	3%
Freight Movement	2%

0.4. OVERVIEW OF FINANCIAL ELEMENT

The Financial Element evaluates the anticipated revenue and funding gaps for transportation needs in Sierra County. The county's short-term funding needs exceed \$71 million in transportation improvements (primarily road and bridge projects) identified for the first ten years (through 2035), while long-term financially unconstrained needs for roadway and bridge capital improvements are projected to surpass \$200 million over 20+ years. These financial requirements underscore the importance of leveraging diverse funding sources to address immediate and strategic transportation priorities.

Funding sources include:

- **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):** \$10 million allocated over five years, primarily targeting infrastructure improvements for state highways and regionally significant roadways. STIP funding is critical for addressing Sierra County's pressing roadway maintenance and rehabilitation needs.
- **Highway User Tax Account (HUTA):** Annual revenue of approximately \$1.2 million is dedicated to local roadway maintenance. This funding supports snow removal, pavement repairs, and other essential services to ensure

year-round accessibility.

- **Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) Funding:** An estimated annual allocation of approximately \$2 million is dedicated under SB 1 to support local transportation projects. This funding is aimed at covering routine maintenance, minor repairs, and targeted improvements that keep roadways safe and operational. SB 1 funds are essential in bridging immediate funding gaps and complementing other state and federal sources to ensure Sierra County's transportation system remains resilient and responsive to emerging needs.
- **Federal Infrastructure Programs:** Competitive grants under the IIJA provide an opportunity for significant investment in long-term projects, such as bridge retrofits, zero-emission transit upgrades, and active transportation infrastructure. Recent IIJA-funded projects include enhancements to rural transit systems and improvements to State Route 49.

Additional funding mechanisms, such as local sales tax measures and private-public partnerships, could ultimately be explored to fill the identified gaps. A comprehensive analysis of funded versus unfunded projects in this RTP will illustrate the transportation shortfall across all modes, highlighting areas requiring urgent investment and planning.

Figure 0-3: Funded vs Unfunded Projects by Mode

Mode	Percentage Funded	Percentage Unfunded
Roadways	60%	40%
Bridges	70%	30%
Public Transit	50%	50%
Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure	30%	70%
Aviation	20%	80%

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. ABOUT THE SIERRA COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

The Sierra County Transportation Commission (SCTC) serves as the Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA) for Sierra County, ensuring the alignment of local, state, and federal transportation objectives. The SCTC's mission includes facilitating sustainable, safe, and equitable transportation solutions that enhance mobility for all residents and visitors. As a predominantly rural county with dispersed population centers like Loyalton, Downieville, Alleghany, Pike, Verdi, Sierra City, Calpine, and Sierraville, SCTC addresses unique challenges, including limited transit access, aging infrastructure, and diverse stakeholder interests.

Key SCTC functions include:

- Planning: Developing and updating the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to guide long-term investments.
- Funding Administration: Managing and allocating federal and state transportation funds, such as those provided through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Transportation Development Act (TDA).
- Stakeholder Engagement: Collaborating with local governments, tribal entities, and state agencies to achieve shared transportation goals.
- Technical Advisory Committees

SCTC works with two key advisory bodies to enhance the planning process:

- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC): Comprised of transportation professionals from local, regional, and state agencies, the TAC provides technical guidance on transportation priorities.
- Airport Advisory Committee (AAC): This group provides specialized guidance on aviation-related issues, ensuring that transportation planning is well integrated with airport development, operational efficiency, and community safety.
- Social Services Transportation Advisory Council (SSTAC): Focused on the needs of seniors, people with disabilities,

and low-income populations, the SSTAC ensures equity in transit planning.

1.2. ABOUT THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) serves as a comprehensive and forward-looking blueprint designed to address the multifaceted transportation challenges and opportunities unique to the region. It provides a structured framework for identifying and addressing current and future transportation needs, establishing investment priorities that balance practicality with long-term benefits, and ensuring compliance with both state and federal mandates.

Key Functions of the Sierra County RTP:

- **Identifying Regional Transportation Needs:** The RTP systematically evaluates existing transportation infrastructure, including state highways, local roads, and public transit systems. It considers demographic shifts, economic trends, and community feedback to pinpoint critical gaps in mobility, access, and safety. This ensures that the transportation system evolves to meet the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.
- **Setting Investment Priorities:** Recognizing that financial resources are finite, the RTP establishes a hierarchy of projects based on criteria such as urgency, community impact, environmental sustainability, and cost-effectiveness. High-priority investments may include repairing deteriorating bridges, enhancing transit access for underserved populations, and developing active transportation networks like bike paths and pedestrian-friendly zones.
- **Alignment with Statewide and Federal Requirements:** This RTP integrates state and federal policies, such as California's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets and federal mandates under the Clean Air Act. This ensures that regional planning contributes to broader objectives like climate adaptation, equity in transportation access, and improved air quality.

Addressing Critical Regional Challenges:

- **Maintaining Rural Connectivity:** Sierra County's vast geography and dispersed population make transportation lifelines essential for connecting communities. The RTP prioritizes maintaining and enhancing critical routes

maintained by the County such as Beckwourth-Calpine Road, Gold Lake Highway (Gold Lake Road), Stampede Dam Road (County Road A23), and County Road A24 (connecting Loyaltown to Beckwourth). These county roadways facilitate not only daily regional travel but also emergency evacuation during wildfires or severe weather events.

- **Preparing for Climate Resilience:** The RTP adopts a proactive approach to climate adaptation, addressing vulnerabilities such as flooding, landslides, and wildfire risks. Investments in infrastructure resilience—such as improved drainage systems, wildfire-resistant designs, and redundant transportation routes—are essential for safeguarding mobility and community wellbeing in the face of extreme weather events.

Vision for the Future:

The Sierra County RTP is more than a planning document; it is a tool for fostering economic growth, ensuring social equity, and protecting the environment. By strategically aligning short-term actions with long-term goals, the RTP creates a pathway to a transportation network that is not only functional but also adaptable, sustainable, and reflective of the unique needs of Sierra County's communities and ecosystems. This holistic approach ensures that transportation investments yield maximum benefits for generations to come.

1.2.1. Purpose of the Plan

- Establish a 20-year vision for transportation investments that support mobility, safety, and environmental sustainability.
- Provide a framework for prioritizing transportation projects based on need, impact, and cost-effectiveness.
- Comply with legal mandates, including California Government Code §65080, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and the Clean Air Act.

1.2.2. Regional Transportation Plan Elements

The Sierra County RTP is organized into five key chapters:

1. **Executive Summary & Introduction:** Outlines the plan's purpose, scope, and process.

2. **Existing Conditions:** Assesses current demographic, economic, and transportation trends.
3. **Policy Element:** Defines goals, objectives, and performance measures to guide investment decisions.
4. **Action Element:** Lists prioritized transportation projects and programs.
5. **Financial Element:** Details anticipated revenues, funding sources, and fiscal constraints.

1.3. RTP PLANNING PROCESS

1.3.1. Federal Planning Requirements

Federal laws establish a robust framework for developing Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs), ensuring that these plans not only meet local and regional needs but also align with national priorities and objectives. These requirements emphasize creating a transportation system that is safe, sustainable, and accessible for all users while preserving critical infrastructure for future generations. By integrating these federal mandates, RTPs play a crucial role in achieving broader goals related to public safety, environmental sustainability, and social equity.

The Sierra County RTP reflects these federal objectives, addressing key focus areas critical to the county's unique challenges and opportunities:

- **Safety:** Prioritizing infrastructure and policies that protect all users—drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders—by reducing accidents and improving system reliability.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Actively mitigating greenhouse gas emissions through strategies such as promoting active transportation while preparing infrastructure to withstand climate-related impacts like extreme weather and wildfires.
- **Equity:** Bridging gaps in transportation access for underserved populations, ensuring that all residents, regardless of location, income, or mobility, can connect to essential services and opportunities.
- **Infrastructure Preservation:** Allocating resources to maintain and enhance existing transportation assets, ensuring their longevity and functionality to meet current and future demands.

Through these guiding principles, the Sierra County RTP aligns regional priorities with federal standards, contributing

to a safer and transportation network that works for all Sierra County residents.

1.3.2. Coordination with Other Plans and Studies

The Sierra County RTP aligns with several key planning documents, ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach to transportation development that integrates local, regional, and state priorities. These foundational documents provide a comprehensive framework to guide transportation investments and policy decisions:

- **Sierra County General Plan (2012):** This foundational document outlines the county’s overarching goals and policies related to land use, housing, economic development, and transportation. It provides the long-term vision for sustainable growth and ensures that transportation planning supports compatible land use patterns and community needs.
- **Caltrans District 3 Highway Management Plan:** This document guides the maintenance, improvement, and operational strategies for state highways within the region. By coordinating with this plan, the RTP ensures that Sierra County’s transportation priorities align with Caltrans’ efforts to preserve and enhance critical highway infrastructure.
- **Neighboring Regional Transportation Plans:** These plans from adjacent counties support cross-border connectivity and collaboration. Aligning with neighboring RTPs ensures that Sierra County’s transportation network integrates seamlessly with regional systems, facilitating economic activity, tourism, and mobility across jurisdictional boundaries.

Together, these documents create a cohesive framework that strengthens the RTP’s focus on sustainability, safety, equity, and regional collaboration.

1.3.3. Climate Change and Environmental Quality

Addressing climate change and ensuring environmental quality are central priorities for the Sierra County RTP. With transportation contributing 39% of California’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (CARB, 2023), the RTP plays a critical role in advancing strategies to reduce emissions, promote sustainability, and enhance resilience to climate impacts. These efforts align with state and federal goals for reducing GHG emissions while preparing infrastructure to withstand

increasingly severe weather events.

Key strategies include:

- **Expanding Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Infrastructure:** Increasing the availability of EV charging stations and alternate fueling facilities, such as hydrogen fuel cells, to encourage the adoption of cleaner vehicle technologies. This supports both regional air quality improvements and California’s broader GHG reduction targets.
- **Promoting Active Transportation Options:** Developing and enhancing infrastructure for walking and biking, such as safe routes to schools, multi-use trails, and bike lanes. These initiatives aim to reduce reliance on motor vehicles while promoting healthier, more sustainable mobility choices.
- **Enhancing Resilience to Extreme Weather:** Strengthening the transportation network to withstand climate-related challenges like flooding, wildfires, and severe winter storms. Projects include upgrading drainage systems, implementing erosion control measures, and maintaining critical routes for emergency access.

These integrated strategies ensure that Sierra County’s transportation network contributes to climate mitigation, supports a sustainable future, and remains reliable under changing environmental conditions.

1.3.4. Transportation/Land Use Integration

The coordination of transportation investments with land use policies remains an important focus of the Sierra County RTP, ensuring that growth in population centers and communities is served by appropriate infrastructure while preserving the county’s rural character. By aligning transportation projects with local development goals, the RTP supports tourism, local economies, and efficient travel for residents and visitors alike—without undermining the practical necessity of personal vehicles for longer distances and everyday rural living.

Key projects that demonstrate this balance include:

Targeted Sidewalk and Bike Lane Enhancements in Loyalton: As Sierra County’s only incorporated city, Loyalton benefits from modest expansions of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. These improvements promote safety and provide better access to schools, parks, and commercial centers in a manner consistent with the city’s scale and the broader County General Plan.

Connectivity Improvements Between Community Cores and Recreation Areas: Strengthening strategic links to popular recreation destinations—such as trails, campgrounds, and scenic sites—promotes tourism, local business, and outdoor recreation opportunities. These connections are designed to enhance mobility without compromising the rural environment that is central to Sierra County's identity.

By focusing on realistic, context-sensitive projects, this integrated approach supports economic vitality, preserves rural character, and promotes safe travel options. This RTP aims to provide well-maintained roadways and practical, appropriately scaled active transportation amenities—fostering a well-rounded and resilient transportation network for Sierra County.

1.3.5. Participation and Coordination

Robust community engagement was a cornerstone of the RTP development process, ensuring that diverse perspectives shaped its priorities and strategies. A variety of outreach methods, including public workshops, tribal consultations, and community surveys, provided opportunities for residents, stakeholders, and tribal representatives to contribute meaningful input. This collaborative approach ensured that the RTP aligns with local values and addresses the region's unique transportation challenges.

1.3.6. Coordination with Native American Tribal Governments

The Sierra County RTP prioritizes collaboration with Native American Tribal Governments to ensure transportation planning respects and incorporates tribal needs and cultural heritage. Through a series of consultations, tribal representatives provided essential insights on mobility challenges, culturally significant locations, and the unique needs of their communities, which informed the RTP's overarching strategies.

Key Areas of Collaboration:

1. Respect for Culturally Significant Sites:

- Planning processes considered the location and significance of sacred and historical tribal lands, ensuring transportation decisions align with preserving these areas. Special attention was given to avoiding disruption to sites of cultural importance while balancing transportation improvements.

2. Ongoing Tribal Engagement:

- The RTP framework ensures continuous consultation with tribal governments during project development and implementation, allowing for adaptive planning that incorporates evolving needs and feedback.
- Collaborative discussions emphasized not just immediate transportation issues but also long-term goals for tribal mobility and cultural preservation.

This approach ensures the RTP respects and integrates tribal perspectives, fostering a transportation network that reflects the shared goals of access, sustainability, and cultural preservation.

ADMIN DRAFT

Table 1.1: Native American Tribal Organizations

Tribe/Organization	Role/Engagement
Maidu Cultural and Development Group	Consultation on cultural preservation and transportation impacts.
Washoe Tribe of Nevada	Input on historical lands and transportation access.
Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians	Engagement on transportation projects affecting tribal resources.
Tsi-Akim Maidu Corporation	Advisory role on tribal and cultural transportation priorities.

1.3.7. Coordination with the California State Wildlife Action Plan

The Sierra County RTP aligns closely with the California State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) to ensure that transportation planning supports regional conservation goals and minimizes environmental impacts. By integrating these priorities, the RTP balances infrastructure development with the protection of sensitive ecosystems and species.

Key Conservation Integration Strategies:

1. Protection of Sensitive Habitats and Species:

- This RTP incorporates measures to safeguard critical habitats and natural ecosystems, aligning with state conservation goals. By integrating these considerations into transportation planning, this RTP ensures that infrastructure development supports environmental stewardship and minimizes impacts on sensitive areas.

2. Minimizing Ecological Impacts:

- Route planning emphasizes the avoidance of environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, migration corridors, and biodiversity hotspots. Where avoidance is not feasible, strategies include habitat restoration and mitigation to minimize disruptions.
3. **Wildlife-Friendly Infrastructure:**
- Consideration is given to designing wildlife crossings, such as overpasses or underpasses, in areas where transportation corridors intersect migration routes or known wildlife activity zones. These features reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions and maintain ecosystem connectivity.
4. **Collaboration with Conservation Agencies:**
- The RTP process includes consultations with resource agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the U.S. Forest Service, to ensure transportation improvements align with broader conservation goals. Coordination allows for the integration of resource management plans and environmental assessments.

This approach ensures that transportation development complements ecological stewardship, creating a resilient and environmentally sustainable transportation network that aligns with California's conservation vision.

2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the existing conditions influencing the development and implementation of the 2025 Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It builds on the baseline established in the previous RTP and incorporates more recent data, trends, and studies to offer a holistic view of Sierra County's transportation setting.

The existing conditions analysis includes demographic profiles, land use patterns, current transportation infrastructure, mobility services, environmental constraints, economic considerations, public health factors, safety trends, and technological capacities. Collectively, these insights form the foundation upon which subsequent planning and policy recommendations will rest, ensuring that the 2025 RTP addresses local needs while aligning with regional, state, and federal transportation goals.

2.1. SETTING

Sierra County is located in Northern California, nestled in the heart of the northern Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Encompassing approximately 958 square miles, the county is characterized by a complex geography of steep mountain slopes, densely forested hills, alpine meadows, and the expansive Sierra Valley, the largest alpine valley in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. More than two-thirds of Sierra County's land area (about 68%, per U.S. Forest Service [USFS], 2023) is publicly owned and managed by federal agencies, primarily the Tahoe National Forest and the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest. This predominance of public lands influences transportation planning, as significant roadway mileage traverses remote areas maintained to serve both local communities and recreational visitors.

Topographic challenges define the county's transportation environment. Elevations range roughly from 1,800 feet in the Sierra Valley near Loyalton to over 8,800 feet at the county's higher peaks. Snow accumulation, rockslides, and variable geological conditions require careful roadway design and consistent maintenance. Travel corridors, primarily aligned along river valleys and plateaus, reflect historical settlement patterns and remain critical for connecting sparsely distributed communities.

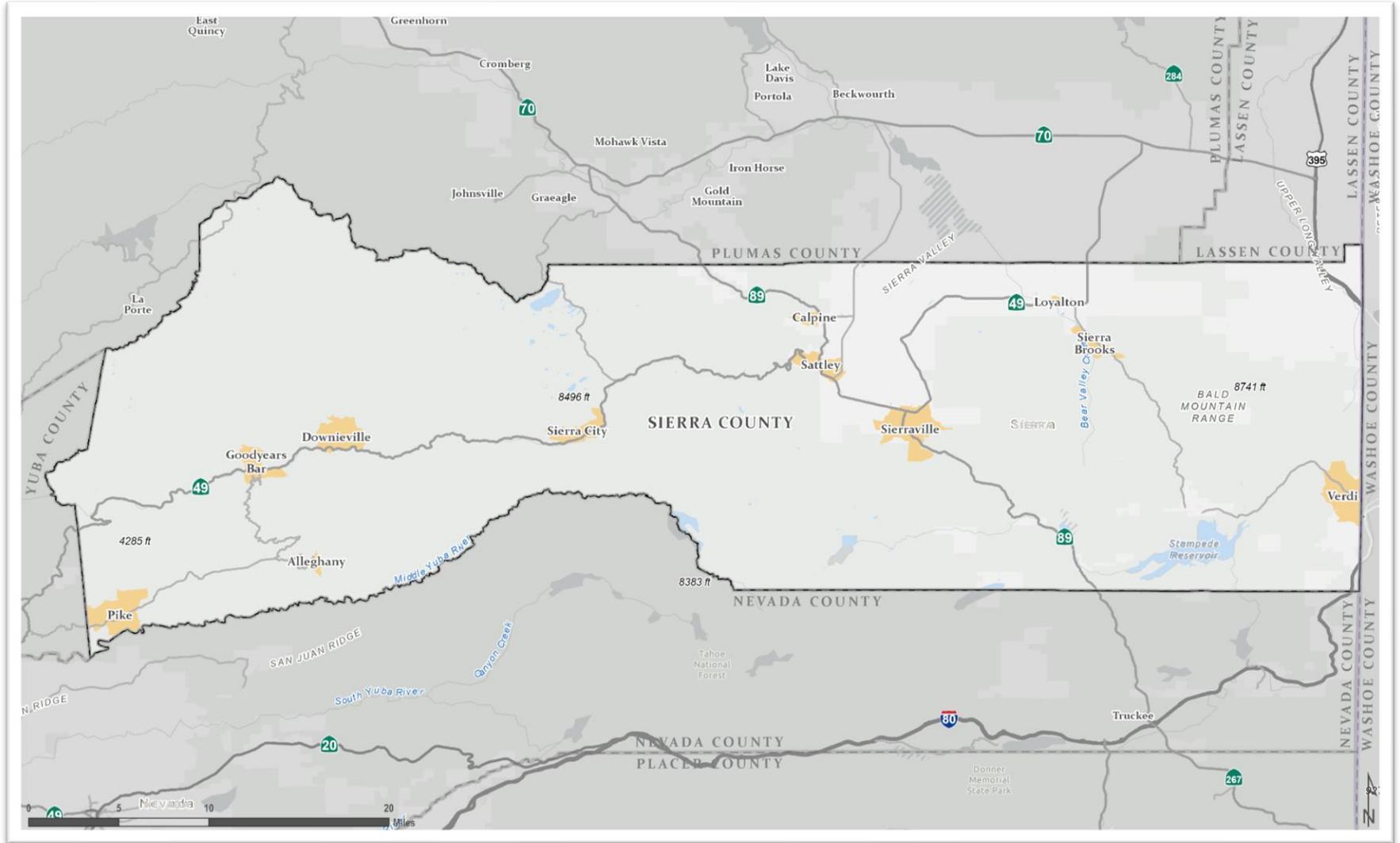


Figure 2-1: Location Map

2.2. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

2.2.1. Historical Population

Sierra County's population remains one of the smallest in California, accounting for less than 0.01% of the state's total population. As of January 2024, the California Department of Finance (DOF) estimates the county's population at approximately 3,150 individuals, slightly down from 3,236 recorded in the 2020 U.S. Census. This represents a decline of about 2.7% over four years. Since the early 2000s, population change in Sierra County has been minimal, often fluctuating around 3,000–3,500 residents. Outmigration of younger adults seeking employment and educational opportunities elsewhere, coupled with lower birth rates, has contributed to a relatively stable or slightly declining population base.

Figure 2-2. Historical and Forecasted Population

Year	Population	Percentage Change
2000	3,555	-
2010	3,240	-8.9%
2020	3,236	-0.1%
2024	3,150 (est.)	-2.7%
2030 (projected)	3,008	-4.5%
2040 (projected)	2,993	-0.5%

Source: California Department of Finance (DOF) Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau (Decennial Census 2000, 2010, 2020)

DEMOGRAPHICS

2.2.2. Age of Population

The median age in Sierra County is approximately 54.3 years (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2017–2021), significantly higher than the California median of 37.5. Over 30% of the population is 65 or older, compared to around 15% statewide. This aging demographic points to mobility challenges such as the need for medical transportation, senior-friendly transportation services, and a focus on accessible pedestrian infrastructure in town centers. Conversely, the share of residents under 18 is around 15%, lower than the state average, suggesting limited school-related transportation demand but underscoring the importance of recruiting and retaining young families to maintain community vitality.

Table 2.1: Existing Age of Population

Age Group	Sierra County (%)	California (%)
Under 18 Years	15%	22%
18–64 Years	55%	63%
65 Years and Older	30%	15%
Median Age	54.3 Years	37.5 Years

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017–2021

2.2.3. Demographics

The county's population is predominantly white (approximately 87%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (8%), with the remaining 5% composed of Native American, Asian, African American, and multiracial individuals (ACS 2017–2021).

While overall diversity is limited, cultural activities, small businesses, and seasonal workers of various backgrounds introduce a level of multicultural influence on community life and transportation needs.

Table 2.2: Race and Ethnicity in Sierra County

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage of Population
White	87%
Hispanic or Latino	8%
Native American	2%
Asian	1%
African American	<1%
Multiracial/Other	2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017–2021

2.3. SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

2.3.1. Income and Poverty

Sierra County's socioeconomic conditions present a nuanced picture of rural living, with challenges linked to limited economic opportunities, lower-than-average income levels, and persistent poverty rates. Understanding these factors is critical to shaping transportation policies that address equity, accessibility, and economic mobility.

The median household income in Sierra County is approximately \$61,108 (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey [ACS] 2017–2021), substantially lower than the statewide median of nearly \$84,900. This income disparity highlights the financial challenges faced by many Sierra County residents. Over 20% of households in the county are classified as low-income by California Housing Partnership standards, emphasizing the need for affordable

transportation options to access jobs, education, and essential services.

- Figure 2.3 provides a visual representation of the spatial distribution of median household incomes across the county, illustrating disparities between communities like Loyaltown and more rural, unincorporated areas.

Table 2.3: Median Household Income

Location	Median Household Income
Sierra County	\$90,000
California (Statewide)	\$84,900
United States	\$74,580

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2018–2022

Approximately 12.2% of Sierra County residents lived below the federal poverty threshold between 2017 and 2021 (ACS), compared to 15.1% statewide. This percentage reflects a mix of economic stagnation in the region and limited high-wage employment opportunities. Children and seniors are disproportionately affected; nearly 20% of children and 15% of seniors live in poverty. Transportation barriers compound these challenges, limiting access to education, healthcare, and employment.

Table 2.4: Poverty Level

Population Group	Sierra County Poverty Rate (%)	California Poverty Rate (%)
Overall Population	12.2%	15.1%
Children (Under 18 Years)	20%	18.5%
Seniors (65 Years and Older)	15%	10.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017–2021

2.3.2. Employment

Historically, Sierra County's economy centered on resource extraction—mining, logging, and milling were once the primary employers. Current key employers include county government, U.S. Forest Service offices, the local school district, small-scale ranching, and seasonal tourism/hospitality services. The Downieville-Loyalton corridor experiences increased visitation during summer, with mountain biking, fishing, hunting, and river rafting drawing thousands of visitors. According to the Sierra County Economic Development Committee, tourism-related spending in summer months can boost local businesses by up to 20-30%.

Table 2.5: Major Employers

Employer	Location	Industry
Sierra County Government	Downieville	County Government Offices
U.S. Forest Service	Various	Federal Government
Sierra-Plumas Joint Unified School District	Loyalton	Education
Eastern Plumas Health Care	Loyalton	Healthcare Services
Herrington's Sierra Pines Resort	Sierra City	Hospitality and Tourism
Sardine Lake Resort	Sierra City	Hospitality and Tourism
Golden West Dining	Loyalton	Restaurant
Leonard's Market	Loyalton	Retail Grocery
Western Sierra Medical Clinic	Downieville	Healthcare Services
Toddler Towers Child Care Center	Loyalton	Child Care Services

Source: California Employment Development Department

Sierra County’s unemployment rate in 2023 was in the 5–6% range, as estimated by the Employment Development Department. This relatively low unemployment rate reflects a modest recovery in local jobs, while also noting that employment is highly seasonal due to the county’s reliance on weather-dependent industries. In particular, sectors such as construction, forestry, and tourism experience significant fluctuations based on seasonal weather conditions.

A large share of the county’s workforce commutes to neighboring areas for work. With local job opportunities limited, many residents travel to Nevada and Plumas counties in search of employment. This reliance on out-of-county commuting not only underscores the scarcity of jobs within Sierra County but also contributes to increased transportation costs, especially for low-income households.

Together, these factors illustrate the unique economic and employment challenges faced by Sierra County and provide important context for regional transportation and economic planning.

Table 2.6: Employment Characteristics

Employment Characteristic	Sierra County	California
Unemployment Rate (2023)	5–6%	4.1%
Primary Employment Sectors	Public Sector, Small-Scale Agriculture, Seasonal Tourism	Technology, Healthcare, Services
Percentage of Workers Commuting Outside County	85%	N/A
Major Destinations for Commuters	Nevada County, Plumas County	N/A
Seasonal Employment Sensitivity	High	Moderate
Average Hourly Wage for Top Industries	\$15–\$20	\$25–\$30

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, California Employment Development Department (EDD) 2023, Sierra County Economic Development Committee

2.3.3. Educational Attainment

Educational attainment in Sierra County reflects both strengths and challenges tied to its rural character. Approximately 92% of residents aged 25 and older have at least a high school diploma, slightly exceeding the state average. However, only 23% have attained a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 36% statewide. This disparity highlights the limited access to higher education opportunities in the region. The absence of colleges or universities within the county forces residents to travel to neighboring areas like Chico or Reno for post-secondary education, creating financial and logistical barriers, especially for low-income families. Limited broadband access in rural parts of the county further restricts online learning, a critical tool for education in remote areas. Additionally, for younger residents, insufficient school transportation options in remote communities can hinder attendance and participation in extracurricular activities.

Transportation infrastructure remains an important factor in supporting educational opportunities across Sierra County. Recognizing that many residents rely on personal vehicles given the county's rural nature, the RTP nonetheless identifies targeted improvements that can reduce barriers to education. Selectively enhancing bus routes and services, especially those connecting K-12 students to schools, can improve reliability and safety, while modest sidewalk and bike lane extensions in key areas (e.g., near schools or community centers) provide safer travel options for students who walk or bike.

In addition, increasing access to broadband services is crucial in bridging the educational gap—particularly for remote learning, online training, and college coursework. By prioritizing Safe Routes to School measures and supporting connectivity where it is most beneficial, Sierra County can help its residents pursue higher levels of education without undermining the county's rural context. These efforts, aligned with the General Plan's focus on well-managed growth and community well-being, can ultimately strengthen the local workforce, foster economic vitality, and improve quality of life throughout the region.

Table 2.7: Educational Attainment 18 Years and Over

Educational Attainment Level	Percentage of Population Aged 18+
Less than High School Diploma	8%
High School Diploma or Equivalent	35%
Some College, No Degree	25%
Associate's degree	8%
Bachelor's Degree	13%
Graduate or Professional Degree	10%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) 2017–2021

2.4. DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Disadvantaged communities in Sierra County face significant challenges related to income inequality, limited access to essential services, and systemic barriers to mobility and economic opportunity. These communities often experience compounded difficulties due to a lack of infrastructure, limited transportation options, and geographic isolation.

Many residents in these areas, classified as disadvantaged due to low household incomes and limited access to resources, rely heavily on public transportation to reach jobs, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions. However, the county's transit services are limited, with infrequent schedules and long travel times that create obstacles for these populations. Expanding transit services, offering subsidized fares, and introducing demand-responsive transit options are critical steps to reducing transportation barriers and enhancing access to essential services.

Beyond transit, disadvantaged communities also lack sufficient pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. For example, many areas have narrow or non-existent sidewalks, unsafe pedestrian crossings, and limited bike paths. Investments in active transportation infrastructure, such as bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly pathways, can provide low-cost, sustainable mobility options for residents, improving their quality of life and increasing access to opportunities.

The economic realities of disadvantaged communities in Sierra County exacerbate these challenges. Some residents can face financial constraints that limit their ability to afford private vehicles or frequent travel to neighboring counties

for employment or services. Nearly 20% of households in Sierra County qualify as low-income, and these communities often experience higher rates of unemployment and underemployment.

Targeted infrastructure projects in these areas, such as improved roadways, and safe pedestrian crossings, are vital for addressing systemic inequities. Additionally, creating community-focused programs, such as transportation assistance for seniors and individuals with disabilities, can further promote equity and social inclusion.

By prioritizing disadvantaged communities in transportation planning, Sierra County can address long-standing disparities and foster economic resilience. These investments will not only improve mobility and access but also support the broader goals of the 2025 Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan, promoting a more equitable and connected future for all residents.

Factors such as low household incomes, limited public transit, and high exposure to natural hazards like wildfires exacerbate inequities for vulnerable populations, including seniors, low-income families, and tribal communities. The following section explores various tools and metrics that highlight these disparities, such as the Climate and Justice Economic Screening Tool, Healthy Places Index, and CalEnviroScreen 4.0, while identifying opportunities to enhance equity through targeted infrastructure improvements and expanded transportation options.

2.4.1. Climate and Justice Economic Screening and Land Use Authority

The Climate and Justice Economic Screening Tool (CJEST) identifies areas that face compounded socioeconomic and environmental vulnerabilities. In Sierra County, factors such as high wildfire risk, harsh winters, and limited access to economic opportunities contribute to its classification as a disadvantaged rural area. For example, 68% of the county's land is federally owned, over 71% of the county's land is in public ownership, primarily federal lands managed as parts of the Tahoe, Humboldt-Toiyabe, and Plumas National Forests. An additional 10% of the county consists of privately held agricultural land (mostly ranches and farms in areas like Sierra Valley). This means only around 19% of Sierra County's area is privately owned and not used for agriculture or held in public trust, highlighting the limited land available for new development or tax base expansion. The dominance of federal forest lands and other protected areas has historically constrained large-scale economic development, as much of the land is off-limits to private enterprise or intensive use.

In addition to federal lands, the State of California owns and manages portions of Sierra County for conservation. For example, the Antelope Valley and Smithneck Creek Wildlife Areas in eastern Sierra County's Sierra Valley watershed occupy approximately 5,700 acres and 1,400 acres respectively. These state wildlife areas protect critical deer habitat and wetlands and were established to preserve winter range and migration corridors for local mule deer herds. Combined, state-owned conservation lands account for roughly 1% of the county's area, with recent expansions adding more acreage to these protected areas. Although smaller in extent than federal forests, state-owned conservation lands further contribute to the share of the county that is protected from development.

Beyond government-owned lands, conservation trusts, and land preserves play a significant role in land protection in Sierra County. Notable examples include:

- Sierra County Land Trust (Lakes Basin): A local land trust focused on the scenic Lakes Basin area in the county's west. The trust has acquired and now stewards about 1,645 acres in the Sierra Buttes/Lakes Basin region, preserving alpine lakes and forest habitat to maintain ecological integrity and recreational access.
- Feather River Land Trust (Sierra Valley): This trust has conserved thousands of acres of wetlands and rangeland in Sierra Valley, which spans eastern Sierra County. It owns the 2,575-acre Sierra Valley Preserve, protecting one of the largest wetland complexes in the Sierra Nevada and a renowned bird habitat along the Pacific Flyway. In addition, the trust works with local ranchers to establish conservation easements that keep private lands as open space or working ranches. Several ranch easements protect extensive areas from development, ensuring the maintenance of agricultural use and wildlife corridors. Through these efforts, conservation trusts have permanently protected roughly 10,000–15,000 acres of private land in Sierra County.

restricting economic development opportunities. Geographic isolation and limited public transportation options can potentially exacerbate economic and social vulnerabilities for some residents, particularly for seniors and low-income families reliant on these systems.

2.4.2. United States Department of Transportation Equitable Transportation Community Explorer

The Equitable Transportation Community Explorer highlights disparities in transportation access, which align with Sierra County's rural geography and aging population. Nearly 30% of residents are over age 65, compared to the

statewide average of 15%, emphasizing the need for medical transportation and senior-friendly infrastructure (Sierra RTP, 2020). The dispersed population also struggles with inadequate connectivity between smaller communities, such as Sierraville and Calpine, and the central hub of Loyalton, where essential services are concentrated. Expanded paratransit and dial-a-ride services would help bridge these gaps.

2.4.3. Median Household Income

The Sierra County median household income is \$90,000 for a four-person household, according to the county’s 2024–2029 Housing Element. This figure comes from the California HCD’s 2023 State Income Limits, which are updated annually for housing programs.

Comparison: Sierra County’s 2023 median is slightly above the statewide median of \$87,100 and lower than some neighboring counties (e.g. Placer: \$119,900; Nevada: \$112,900). This highlights that while Sierra’s median income exceeds the California average, it still trails the medians of more affluent neighboring counties.

Table 2.8: Disadvantaged Communities – Median Household Income

Region/Community	Median Household Income	Percentage of Low-Income Households
Sierra County Overall	\$90,000	~20%
California (State Average)	\$87,100	~14%
Sierra Valley	\$50,000 (Approximately)	Higher than county average
Downieville	\$112,000 (Approximately)	Lower than county average

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (2017–2021); California Housing Partnership, 2023.

Notes:

- Sierra County’s median income significantly trails the state average, with rural outposts like Sierra Valley and Downieville facing pronounced economic challenges.

Figure 2-3: Median Household Income Map

2.4.4. California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool 4.0

CalEnviroScreen 4.0 identifies significant environmental health vulnerabilities in Sierra County, such as wildfire exposure, aging infrastructure, and historical mining contamination. Regions like Downieville and Sierra City are particularly susceptible to wildfires due to dense forests and insufficient evacuation routes. Transportation projects aimed at improving wildfire resilience and emergency egress are essential to safeguarding residents and protecting natural resources.

2.4.5. Healthy Places Index

The Healthy Places Index underscores a need for improvements in public health indicators in Sierra County. The county ranks low on healthcare access, transportation connectivity, and active mobility infrastructure. Limited pedestrian and bike-friendly pathways in most communities hinder physical activity, while poor connectivity increases reliance on personal vehicles. Expanding Safe Routes to School programs and adding multi-use trails can encourage healthier, more active lifestyles while addressing equity gaps in transportation.

Table 2.9: Disadvantaged Communities – Health Places Index

Indicator	Sierra County	Statewide Average
Healthcare Access	Low	Moderate to High
Transportation Connectivity	Low	Moderate
Active Mobility Infrastructure (Bike/Walk Pathways)	Limited	Moderate to Extensive
Physical Activity Levels	Below Average	Average
Reliance on Personal Vehicles	High	Moderate

Source: California Healthy Places Index (HPI), 2023.

Note:

- Limited bike and pedestrian infrastructure and poor transportation connectivity contribute to physical inactivity and reliance on private vehicles.

2.4.6. National School Lunch Program

Approximately 40% of school-aged children in Sierra County qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, indicating widespread economic need. Access to education is further complicated by insufficient transportation infrastructure, particularly in rural regions. Enhancing school bus services, pedestrian safety features near schools, and affordable transit options will help ensure that children from low-income families can access education safely and equitably.

Table 2.10: Disadvantaged Communities – Free or Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility

Indicator	Sierra County	Statewide Average
Percentage of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Meals	~40%	~55%
Access to School Transportation Services	Limited	Moderate to High
Pedestrian Safety Features Near Schools	Minimal	Moderate

Source: California Department of Education, 2023.

Notes:

- Approximately 40% of students in Sierra County qualify for free or reduced-price meals, reflecting economic challenges.
- Limited transportation infrastructure and pedestrian safety features hinder equitable access to education for

low-income families.

- Investments in school bus services, Safe Routes to School initiatives, and affordable transit options are critical for addressing these disparities.

2.4.7. Tribal Communities and Communities Without Data

Tribal communities, including the Washoe and Maidu, emphasize preserving access to sacred sites and traditional lands. However, limited data on transportation needs within tribal areas complicates planning efforts. Inclusive consultation processes are essential for identifying and addressing the unique mobility and cultural preservation needs of tribal residents. Improved transportation access to tribal areas would enhance both cultural heritage preservation and economic opportunities

2.5. HOUSING

2.5.1. Housing Characteristics

Household sizes in Sierra County average about 2.1 persons per household, smaller than the California average of 2.9 (ACS 2017–2021). Homeownership rates are relatively high (~70%), reflecting a stable but aging homeowner population. Median household income is around \$90,000, slightly higher than the state median of nearly \$84,900. With fewer high-wage employment opportunities, residents often commute long distances for work, impacting transportation demand and cost-sensitivity to fuel prices. Nearly 20% of households can be considered low-income by state standards (California Housing Partnership, 2023), emphasizing the importance of affordable and reliable transportation options for basic access to goods, services, and employment.

Over 80% of the county's private land lies within the Sierra Valley and along the Highway 49 corridor. Agricultural land (ranching, hay production) and low-density residential development characterize these areas. Existing General Plan land use designations and zoning ordinances promote low-density settlement patterns that reflect infrastructural limitations—lack of central sewer and water in outlying areas, and steep slopes that preclude more intensive development. The dispersed settlement pattern imposes longer travel distances to basic services and discourages the cost-effectiveness of installing infrastructure such as fixed-route public transit.

Table 2.11: Housing Characteristics

Characteristic	Sierra County	California Average
Average Household Size	2.1 persons/household	2.9 persons/household
Homeownership Rate	~70%	~55%
Median Household Income	\$90,000	\$84,900
Percentage of Low-Income Households	~20%	~14%
Predominant Land Use	Agricultural, Low-Density	Mixed-Use, Higher Density
Infrastructure Constraints	Limited central sewer and water systems	Generally robust infrastructure

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau ACS (2017–2021); California Housing Partnership, 2023.

Notes:

- The high homeownership rate reflects a stable but aging population, while the lower household size and income highlight the rural character and limited economic opportunities.
- Dispersed settlement patterns increase transportation demand and reduce infrastructure cost-efficiency.

2.5.2. Home Value

Housing affordability remains a significant factor in Sierra County, where median home values are substantially lower than California's state average but still present challenges for residents with limited incomes. The median home value

in Sierra County is approximately \$280,000, compared to the state median of \$712,800 (California Association of Realtors, 2023). This disparity reflects the rural nature of the county and lower demand for housing compared to urban areas. However, for many local residents, the lower home values are offset by lower median household incomes, creating a persistent affordability gap.

The aging housing stock, with many homes built before 1980, may present additional challenges such as energy inefficiency and the need for costly maintenance or upgrades. These factors contribute to financial strain for lower-income households, especially those already burdened by long commutes and limited economic opportunities.

Efforts to address housing affordability must also consider the dual pressures of maintaining affordable options for local residents while accommodating seasonal demand driven by tourism. The influx of vacation home buyers and short-term rentals, particularly in areas like Downieville and Sierra City, can inflate housing prices, further limiting availability for full-time residents. Strategic housing policies that promote energy-efficient upgrades and support affordable housing developments in key communities could alleviate these challenges while supporting a sustainable, balanced housing market.

Table 2.12: Median Home Value

Metric	Sierra County	CA State Avg.
Median Home Value	\$280,000	\$712,800
Housing Stock (Pre-1980 Homes)	Significant Percentage	Varies
Affordability Gap	High due to lower incomes	Moderate to High
Seasonal Demand Impact	Significant in tourism-driven areas like Downieville and Sierra City	Moderate

2.6. TRANSPORTATION

2.6.1. Vehicle Ownership

Given the rural environment and limited transit services, vehicle ownership is comparatively high. Most households have one or two personal vehicles. According to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) vehicle registration data (2023), there are about 2,100 passenger vehicles registered in the county, resulting in a vehicle-to-population ratio of roughly 0.67 vehicles per capita. While high relative to urban areas, the older average age of these vehicles can indicate greater maintenance challenges and potentially higher emissions per vehicle.

Table 2.13: Vehicle Ownership for Occupied Housing Units

Number of Vehicles per Household	Percentage of Households
0 Vehicles	<5%
1 Vehicle	~40%
2 Vehicles	~45%
3 or More Vehicles	~10%

Source: California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), 2023.

Notes:

- Total registered passenger vehicles: ~2,100 (DMV, 2023).
- Vehicle-to-population ratio: ~0.67 vehicles per capita, reflecting rural reliance on personal vehicles.
- Older vehicles may present maintenance challenges and higher emissions.

2.6.2. Mode Share

Transportation in Sierra County is dominated by private vehicle use, a reflection of the county's rural character and limited public transit options. Over 85% of residents commute using single-occupancy vehicles, a higher proportion than the state average of 72% (U.S. Census Bureau, ACS 2021). Carpooling accounts for approximately 9% of commuting trips, while active transportation modes such as walking and biking represent less than 2% of trips. The share of residents using public transit is negligible, largely due to the absence of fixed-route services and the sparse population distribution.

While the high reliance on private vehicles is expected in a rural county with limited transit infrastructure, the lack of alternative transportation options poses challenges for environmental sustainability and equity. Vulnerable populations, including seniors, low-income households, and individuals without access to a vehicle, face significant barriers to mobility.

Efforts to diversify the mode share include demand-responsive transit services, conceptual plans for multi-use paths, and Safe Routes to School initiatives that encourage walking and biking for shorter trips. Investments in active transportation infrastructure and improved access to shared mobility options, such as vanpools or ride-sharing services, could reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and support state goals for reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT). These strategies align with California's shift to VMT as a CEQA metric, emphasizing the need to promote sustainable transportation alternatives in both rural and urban contexts.

2.6.3. Commuting Patterns

Sierra County's commuting patterns are shaped by its rural character and limited local employment opportunities. Approximately 85% of residents commute outside the county for work, with key destinations including Nevada County, Plumas County, and Reno, Nevada (California Employment Development Department, 2023). The median one-way commute time is roughly 30 minutes, reflecting the geographic separation between residential areas and employment hubs. This reliance on inter-county commuting contributes significantly to vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and places a financial and environmental burden on residents.

Commuting patterns also highlight disparities in mobility. Workers in remote areas, such as Sierra City and Alleghany, face longer travel times and fewer transportation options compared to those living in Loyalton, the county's largest community. Limited transit services exacerbate this issue, leaving most residents dependent on personal vehicles. For low-income households, the cost of fuel and vehicle maintenance can pose significant challenges.

Efforts to address these commuting challenges include promoting telecommuting opportunities, expanding carpooling networks, and exploring vanpool services tailored to long-distance commuters. Additionally, infrastructure investments that improve road conditions on key commuter routes, such as State Routes 49 and 89, are critical for ensuring safe and efficient travel. These strategies align with regional and state goals to reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions while improving access to economic opportunities.

Table 2.14: Commuting Patterns

Mode	Percentage of Commuters
Single-Occupancy Vehicles	85%
Carpooling	9%
Active Transportation (Walking/Biking)	<2%
Public Transit	Negligible

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), 2021.

Notes:

- Data highlights Sierra County's high reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, reflecting its rural nature and limited public transit infrastructure.
- Active transportation is minimal due to geographic challenges and sparse pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.
- Public transit share is negligible, primarily because of the absence of fixed-route services and the county's low

population density.

2.6.4. Air Quality

Air quality in Sierra County is generally good due to low traffic volumes, a dispersed population, and a high percentage of forested and undeveloped land. However, periodic wildfire events, both within and near the County, can temporarily reduce air quality and increase health risks due to smoke and particulate matter. While the region does not experience the persistent smog common in urban areas, vehicle emissions, wood heating, and dust from unpaved roads can contribute to localized air quality issues.

This RTP acknowledges the importance of preserving healthy air and reducing transportation-related emissions. Strategies include promoting zero-emission transit options, encouraging carpooling, supporting active transportation, and ensuring that future roadway and maintenance projects align with state and federal air quality standards.

2.7. TRANSPORTATION NETWORK INVENTORY

The county's transportation network is primarily composed of a two-tier system: state highways and local roads.

State Highways

Sierra County's connectivity relies heavily on State Route (SR) 49 and SR 89 and small sections of US Highway 395 and Interstate 80.

- **State Route 49:** A two-lane rural highway providing east-west connectivity, linking Downieville and western Sierra County to neighboring Nevada and Plumas Counties, and eventually connecting travelers to Nevada City and Highway 20 to the south.
 - **State Route 89:** Running north-south through the eastern part of the county, SR 89 connects Sierraville and the Sierra Valley to I-80, Truckee, and Lake Tahoe.
- These highways also serve as critical lifelines for emergency response and evacuation during wildfires and other natural disasters.

Local Roads and County Routes

The county maintains approximately 400 centerline miles of local roads (Sierra County Department of Transportation, 2023). Most are two-lane paved or sometimes narrow paved roads with limited shoulders. Gravel and dirt roads, particularly those leading to remote recreation sites or USFS lands, add another 100 miles of less formalized routes, including many US Forest Service roads.

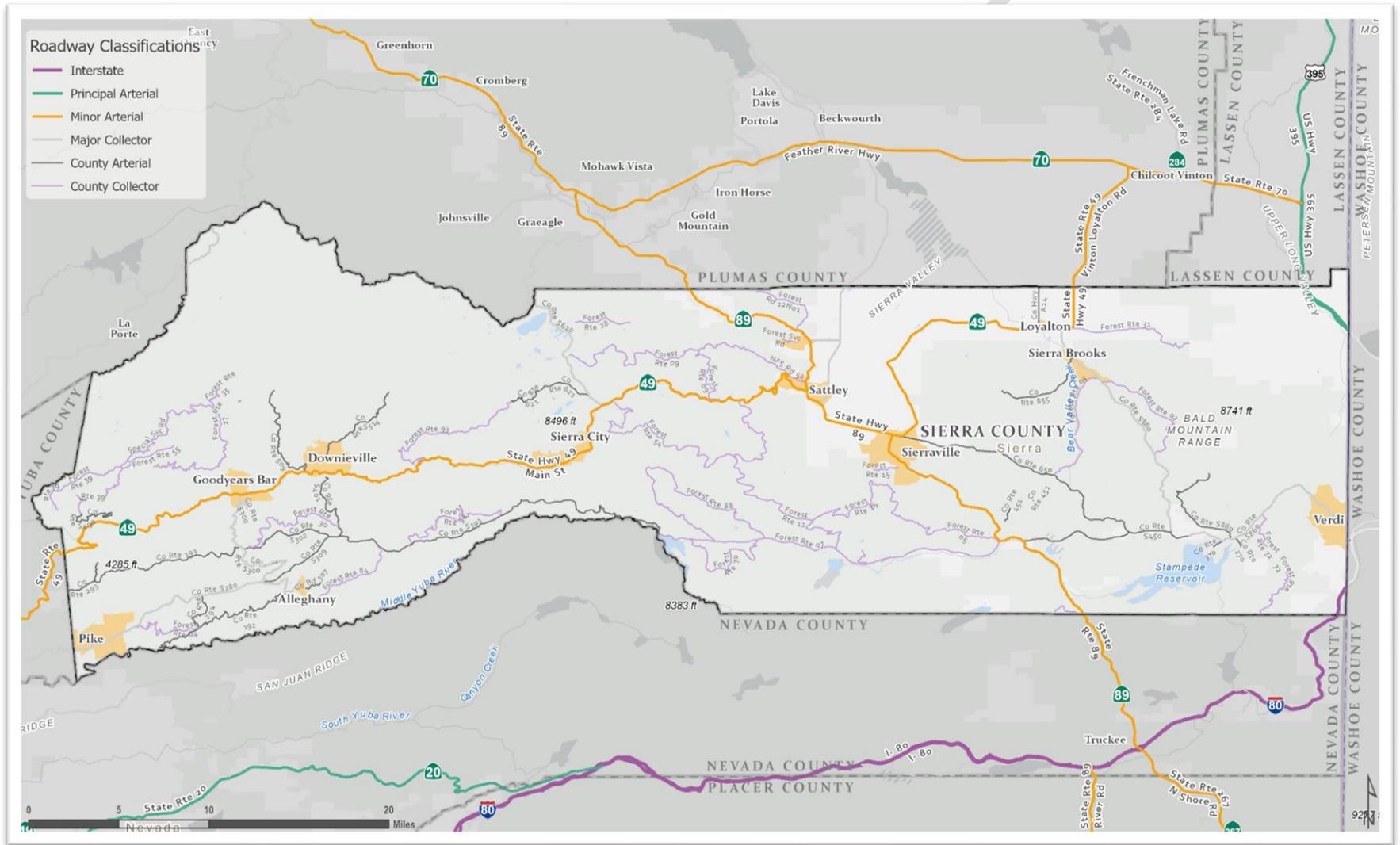


Figure 2-4: Caltrans Functional Classification Designations

Bridges and Structures

Sierra County maintains approximately 45 publicly owned bridges, including both county/local roads and state highway bridges (Caltrans-maintained on routes like Highways 49 and 89). Although a small fraction compared to the state's overall bridge inventory, this number is significant for a rural mountain county.

Notable projects include the replacement of the Salmon Lake Road Bridge (Church Creek), reconstruction of the Packer Lake Road Bridge over Salmon Creek, and plans for a new Plumbago Road Bridge over Kanaka Creek in Alleghany. These projects aim to improve safety, increase load capacities, and modernize infrastructure.

Like many rural areas, Sierra County faces significant challenges maintaining older bridges, some built before the 1940s. Several bridges have structural deficiencies, such as limited load capacities, narrow designs, and aging decks or rails. Maintenance is especially critical in tourist-heavy areas like the Lakes Basin.

New bridge projects in Sierra County comply with modern seismic standards, though the region faces lower seismic risk compared to coastal California. Most older bridges are being replaced with new, earthquake-resistant structures rather than retrofitted. For example, recent bridge replacements at Salmon Creek and Kanaka Creek feature modern seismic engineering. Overall, Sierra County is actively addressing its bridge infrastructure challenges through targeted replacements and upgrades, ensuring bridges meet current safety and seismic standards.

Public Transit Services

Public transit in Sierra County is limited due to low population density and dispersed demand. Sierra County Transit Services (SCTS) provides demand-response service and a limited scheduled route serving Loyalton, Sierraville, Sierra City, and Downieville. Daily ridership averages fewer than 10 trips (Sierra County Transit Annual Report, FY2022- 23), though it increases slightly on market or medical appointment days. Service is oriented primarily toward seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those without private vehicles. Trip reservations, made 24 hours in advance, reflect the challenges of providing cost-effective on-demand transit in a large, sparsely populated area.

Interregional Connections

Although no passenger rail service exists within Sierra County, regional bus connections and access to rail (e.g., Amtrak in Truckee or Colfax) or air travel (the Reno-Tahoe International Airport and the Sacramento International Airport) lie outside county boundaries. Interregional freight and passenger movements rely heavily on highway corridors, underlining the importance of keeping SR 49 and SR 89 operational in all seasons.

Active Transportation Infrastructure

Sierra County's active transportation infrastructure directly in the population centers face notable challenges due to the County's rural nature and limited funding, although much effort has been put into and continues to expand the recreational trail network throughout the County. Pedestrian facilities within population centers are primarily confined to sidewalks in main communities like Loyalton, Downieville, and Sierraville, while many outlying roads lack designated pedestrian spaces, with shoulders varying in width and quality. Bicycle infrastructure is minimal, with no striped bike lanes. Despite this, the county is a renowned destination for mountain biking, particularly in the Downieville region, which attracts thousands of enthusiasts annually to its extensive off-road trail systems maintained by the U.S. Forest Service and local organizations such as the Sierra Buttes Trail Stewardship.

Efforts to enhance and expand the recreational hiking, biking, and equestrian trails are underway, reflecting a growing recognition of the health, economic, and environmental benefits of outdoor recreation. Local Safe Routes to School initiatives aim to improve safety and accessibility for children walking or biking to school. Additionally, conceptual plans for multi-use paths in Loyalton indicate a commitment to expanding infrastructure that supports walking and cycling. However, securing adequate funding and ensuring maintenance capacity remain significant challenges. The California Transportation Commission has allocated substantial funds statewide to improve transportation infrastructure, including active transportation projects, through programs like the Active Transportation Program (ATP). For instance, the 2025 ATP includes staff recommendations for funding projects in small urban and rural areas, which could benefit counties like Sierra. Leveraging such funding opportunities is essential for Sierra County to develop and maintain active transportation infrastructure that meets the needs of its residents and visitors.

Aviation Facilities

The Sierraville-Dearwater Airport, a small general aviation field, services private pilots, emergency medical flights, and occasional charter operations. With fewer than 500 operations per year (FAA Form 5010, 2022), it plays a niche role in regional emergency preparedness and can be important for air base aerial firefighting operations during wildfires

Goods and Freight Movement

Freight traffic is minimal but essential for local commerce. Timber, agricultural products (hay, livestock feed), and basic supplies for local businesses constitute the bulk of truck freight. SR 49 and SR 89 serve as key routes for light to medium-duty trucks transporting goods in and out of the region. Heavier truck traffic is limited by roadway size restrictions on SR 49 due to curve limitations and seasonal closures. According to Caltrans freight data (2023), truck volumes typically account for less than 10% of AADT on these corridors. Challenges include ensuring year-round passability and maintaining pavement conditions that support safe truck operation.

2.8. TRAFFIC CONDITIONS AND VOLUMES

Traffic Volumes and Seasonal Variation

Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is low, generally under 3,000 vehicles on state highways and even lower on local roads. For instance, SR 49 near Downieville recorded an AADT of about 2,500 in 2023 (Caltrans Traffic Census). Peak traffic occurs during summer weekends, when recreational visitors significantly increase volumes, sometimes exceeding 4,000 vehicles per day. Winter volumes drop considerably, often below 1,500 vehicles per day in some segments, due to hazardous driving conditions and reduced tourist activity.

Road Segment	Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)	Peak Summer Weekend Traffic	Winter Traffic (Low Season)
SR 49 near Downieville	~700	~1,000	~1,500
Local Roads (County Average)	Typically less than 1,000	Typically less than 1,500	Typically less than 1,000
Major Recreation Corridors	~1,000-1,850 (varies by route)	~2,000-3,000	~1,000-2,000

Source: Caltrans Traffic Census, 2023.

Notes:

- **Peak Traffic Impact:** Summer weekends see a significant increase in traffic due to recreational tourism (e.g., mountain biking, hiking).
- **Winter Decline:** Traffic volumes drop during winter months, with hazardous conditions such as snow and ice reducing road usage.
- **AADT Variability:** Traffic patterns fluctuate widely based on seasonal tourism, local events, and weather conditions.
- **Traffic Management Needs:** The significant seasonal variation underscores the need for targeted road maintenance, winter weather mitigation, and enhanced safety measures during peak periods.

Level of Service (LOS) and the Shift to Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) Thresholds

With consistently low baseline traffic volumes, the majority of state highways and local roads in Sierra County operate at

LOS A or B under normal conditions. Short-term congestion occurs during special events, such as the Fourth of July parades in Downieville and Loyaltan, or the opening day of fishing season, when surges in visitors and parked vehicles in community centers like Downieville create localized bottlenecks. Seasonal factors, including winter storms, chain controls, and emergency incidents, also contribute to delays or temporary road closures, affecting transportation reliability more significantly than traditional capacity-based LOS metrics.

California's adoption of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as the primary metric for environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) marks a significant shift in how transportation impacts are evaluated. Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), enacted in 2013, transitioned CEQA's focus from congestion and LOS toward VMT to better align with state goals for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and combating climate change. This change reflects the understanding that traditional LOS metrics, which prioritize reducing vehicle delays, can inadvertently encourage roadway expansion and increase VMT, contradicting the state's climate objectives.

Sierra County's unique rural context presents challenges and opportunities under the VMT framework. With a dispersed population and limited public transit options, VMT per capita in Sierra County is relatively high compared to urban areas. However, the rural nature of the county limits congestion as a primary concern, making the shift to VMT a better indicator of environmental and sustainability impacts.

The focus on VMT aligns with the goals of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375), which requires regional planning agencies to integrate transportation and land use planning to reduce GHG emissions. Under SB 375, strategies such as promoting infill development, enhancing transit options, and encouraging active transportation modes become critical for meeting state-mandated GHG reduction targets.

In Sierra County, implementing VMT reduction strategies involves prioritizing projects that promote carpooling, active transportation, and efficient land use. For instance, expanding Safe Routes to School initiatives, improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and encouraging telecommuting through enhanced broadband access can reduce the need for long commutes while maintaining rural quality of life. Additionally, efforts to incorporate transit-oriented development (even in modest forms) near community hubs like Loyaltan can reduce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles.

2.9. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Collision Data and Trends

Sierra County's low traffic volumes correspond to relatively few reported collisions. The California Highway Patrol's Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System (SWITRS) data (2019–2023) shows an average of fewer than 20 reported vehicle collisions annually, with serious injuries and fatalities remaining rare. However, even a small number of severe collisions can be significant in a small population. Factors contributing to collisions include driver unfamiliarity with mountain roads, wildlife crossings (deer, bears), and winter weather conditions that create ice and reduced visibility.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Non-motorized collisions are exceedingly rare, typically fewer than five incidents over a five-year period (SWITRS 2019–2023). While the low number is encouraging, it may also reflect minimal year-round pedestrian or cyclist activity on roads. Given the lack of extensive non-motorized infrastructure, any potential increase in walking or biking will require careful attention to facility design, speed control, and driver education to maintain safety.

Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions (WVCs)

Anecdotal evidence and Caltrans maintenance reports indicate that wildlife-vehicle collisions are an ongoing concern. Deer and other large mammals such as bears, mountain lions, and wolves often cross rural roads, especially at dawn and dusk. Measures such as improved signage, roadside vegetation management, and consideration of wildlife undercrossings are potential safety strategies.

2.10. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CONSIDERATIONS

Climate and Weather Impacts on Transportation

Sierra County's climate is characterized by harsh winters with snowfall exceeding 200 inches in high-elevation areas (National Weather Service, Reno Office). Snow removal is a significant cost and operational challenge. Freeze-thaw cycles damage pavement surfaces, requiring frequent maintenance. Mudslides and falling rocks in steep canyons

can block roads, while summer thunderstorms and lightning strikes contribute to wildfire hazards and fallen trees due to high wind.

As climate change intensifies, the county faces potential increases in extreme weather events, altered snowpack and runoff patterns, and more frequent and intense wildfires. These conditions necessitate robust adaptation and resilience strategies for the transportation network.

Air Quality and Emissions

While air quality is generally good, complying with federal and state standards for ozone and particulates, wildfires in recent years have introduced smoke and particulate matter that can temporarily degrade air quality. The transportation sector remains a modest contributor to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions within the county. Due to long travel distances for basic services and an aging vehicle fleet, per capita GHG emissions from transportation may be higher than in more urbanized areas, even if absolute emissions are low.

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) Emission Inventory (2023) suggests that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita is comparatively high due to dispersed development patterns, highlighting a need for strategies to reduce unnecessary trips, support carpooling, and potentially encourage zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) adoption.

Environmental Regulations and Resource Conservation

Federal and state environmental regulations influence transportation planning. Projects often require environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Mitigation for impacts to sensitive habitats, wetlands, and cultural resources can affect project timelines and costs. Additionally, coordination with USFS and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife ensures that transportation improvements align with resource conservation goals.

2.11. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

Health and Mobility

Sierra County's aging population, with over 30% of residents aged 65 or older, faces significant challenges in

accessing healthcare due to the lack of comprehensive local medical facilities. Most residents must travel over an hour to reach services in Nevada County or Plumas County, creating barriers for those without reliable transportation. Demand-response transit services and volunteer driver programs are essential to bridge this gap, ensuring seniors and individuals with limited mobility can access critical healthcare. Expanding these services and enhancing their reliability will be key to addressing the county's healthcare access disparities while supporting aging-in-place initiatives.

Equity and Access

Low-income households, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and isolated rural residents may face transportation barriers that limit access to employment, education, health care, and social services. In some cases, community organizations coordinate ride-sharing or subsidized transit fares to improve accessibility. Enhancing broadband connectivity could also mitigate some transportation needs by enabling telehealth appointments and telecommuting options. Ensuring equitable investment in transportation infrastructure and services remains a priority in the RTP.

2.12. TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Broadband and Cellular Service

Limited broadband and cellular coverage can hinder the adoption of advanced transportation technologies, such as real-time transit information, integrated mobility apps, or online ridesharing platforms. The California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) Broadband Maps (2023) show that many rural pockets of Sierra County lack reliable high-speed internet, affecting access to telematics, emergency notifications, and remote work opportunities.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure

Sierra County's EV charging infrastructure is currently limited, with only a few non-public charging stations located in Loyalton and Sierraville. This lack of accessible charging options along major corridors like State Routes 49 and 89 not only hampers local adoption of electric vehicles but also reduces the appeal of the region as a destination for eco-

conscious tourists who rely on electric cars. Visitors to popular areas such as Downieville, the Gold Lakes Basin, and Sierra City may avoid traveling to Sierra County due to concerns over range anxiety and the inability to recharge vehicles conveniently.

Expanding EV charging infrastructure aligns closely with California's broader climate goals under Senate Bill 100 and Senate Bill 375, which emphasize reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the transportation sector. Increased charging access in rural and remote areas like Sierra County could support the state's push toward widespread EV adoption, particularly as California transitions away from internal combustion engine vehicle sales by 2035 under Executive Order N-79-20.

Additionally, enhancing EV infrastructure could stimulate local economic development. Strategically located charging stations near recreational areas, downtowns, and visitor hubs would encourage EV drivers to spend more time and money in the county while their vehicles charge. For example, installing Level 2 and DC fast chargers in Downieville and near trailheads in the Lakes Basin Recreation Area would capture revenue from tourists while providing a critical service.

For residents, improved EV infrastructure could lower the long-term costs of vehicle ownership, particularly as EV maintenance and fueling costs are typically lower than those for gasoline-powered vehicles. Coupled with California's growing incentives for EV purchases and infrastructure, such as rebates under the Clean Vehicle Rebate Project (CVRP) and the California Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project (CALeVIP), Sierra County could see increased EV adoption even among its more cost-conscious population segments.

To achieve these goals, public-private partnerships can play a critical role. Working with EV manufacturers, charging network providers, and local businesses to co-fund charging station installations could reduce financial burdens on the county. Federal programs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which includes substantial funding for rural EV infrastructure, present additional opportunities to accelerate deployment.

Prioritizing the expansion of EV infrastructure, particularly at key nodes like Loyaltan, Sierraville, and interregional

corridors, could help Sierra County reduce transportation-related emissions, meet state climate objectives, and enhance its appeal to environmentally conscious visitors and residents alike. These investments also support long-term economic growth while addressing Sierra County's unique rural challenges.

2.13. MAINTENANCE AND FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS

Transportation Funding Challenges

Maintaining extensive roadway mileage with limited funding and a small tax base is a persistent challenge. The County relies on a combination of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, Highway User Tax Account (HUTA) allocations, and federal grants. Costs for snow removal, road maintenance, and bridge rehabilitation can exceed available funds, leading to deferred maintenance and long-term infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Asset Management

The County has begun to implement systematic asset management practices to prioritize projects. Pavement Condition Index (PCI) scores average between 55 and 65 (Sierra County Department of Transportation, 2023), indicating a need for ongoing rehabilitation. Bridge inspections reveal that several are nearing the end of their functional service life and require rehabilitation or replacement in the coming decade.

2.14. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND REGIONAL COORDINATION

Coordination with Neighboring Counties and Agencies

Sierra County works with Nevada, Plumas, and Lassen Counties, as well as Washoe County in Nevada, to address interregional transportation concerns. The county also collaborates with Caltrans District 3 for state highway projects, and with the neighboring Plumas and Nevada counties on matters that affect the broader Sierra Nevada region. Interagency cooperation is essential for effective emergency response planning, corridor management, and grant applications.

2.15. KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RTP

Rural Character, Low Density

Sierra County's rural character, characterized by dispersed settlement patterns and a low population density of roughly 3.4 persons per square mile, presents significant transportation challenges. The limited density makes traditional fixed-route transit systems economically unfeasible, leaving personal vehicles as the predominant mode of transportation. This reliance increases per-capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT), which can negatively impact environmental sustainability goals. Rural transit solutions, such as demand-response services, ride-sharing programs, and small-scale vanpooling, are critical to addressing mobility needs while maintaining fiscal efficiency. Long-term strategies must include flexible transit models tailored to the unique geography and travel patterns of Sierra County.

Aging Population and Workforce Challenges

With over 30% of Sierra County residents aged 65 or older, the transportation system must prioritize aging-in-place strategies. These include expanding paratransit services, improving sidewalk accessibility, and ensuring safe road conditions for medical and social trips. In addition, limited local employment opportunities force approximately 85% of the county's workforce to commute to jobs in neighboring regions, such as Nevada County and Reno. These out-commuting patterns contribute significantly to VMT. Strategies to reduce workforce-related VMT include enhancing telecommuting opportunities, providing commuter vanpools, and supporting economic development initiatives that create more local jobs.

Recreational Tourism Demand

Sierra County's natural assets, including mountain biking trails in Downieville and the Gold Lakes Basin and bird watching in Sierra Valley, attract thousands of visitors annually. Seasonal tourism creates temporary spikes in traffic volumes, especially during summer and fall, straining local roadways, parking infrastructure, and public safety resources. For example, parking congestion in Downieville during the annual Classic Mountain Bike Race often disrupts community access. Balancing the needs of tourists with the preservation of natural resources requires targeted investments, such as constructing dedicated parking facilities, improving trailhead access, and developing shuttle services that reduce vehicle impacts in high-demand areas.

Infrastructure Maintenance and Climate Resilience

Sierra County's harsh winters, with snowfall exceeding 200 inches in some areas, place heavy demands on transportation infrastructure. Frequent freeze-thaw cycles accelerate pavement degradation, while rockslides and flooding can disrupt critical routes. Aging bridges and narrow mountain roads further exacerbate these vulnerabilities. Limited local budgets often delay necessary maintenance, increasing long-term costs and safety risks. Climate change intensifies these challenges, necessitating proactive investments in resilient infrastructure. These include using climate-adaptive materials for road surfaces, constructing redundant evacuation routes, and integrating wildfire-resistant designs into road and bridge upgrades.

Opportunities for Active Transportation and Sustainability

Although the current walking and biking infrastructure is limited, there is growing interest in active transportation, driven by recreational demand and statewide initiatives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Expanding bike trails and pedestrian pathways not only enhance mobility for residents but also supports tourism. For example, connecting Downieville's trail network to neighboring communities could boost local economies while encouraging non-motorized travel.

Additionally, the integration of electric vehicle (EV) and/or hydrogen fuel cell charging stations along State Routes 49 and 89 represents an opportunity to reduce transportation emissions while attracting eco-conscious travelers. Partnering with local businesses to install Level 2 and DC fast chargers can support both residents and visitors. Long-term investments in active transportation infrastructure and EV adoption align Sierra County's transportation network with California's sustainability goals, including those outlined in Senate Bill 375 and the shift to VMT-based planning metrics.

2.16. CONCLUSION

Sierra County's existing transportation conditions reflect the region's rural nature, aging population, environmental constraints, and limited financial resources. State highways and local roads form the backbone of mobility, while transit, pedestrian, and bicycle options remain constrained. Seasonal tourism, an essential economic driver, imposes distinct

demands on infrastructure and services. Environmental challenges, from winter storms to wildfire hazards, underscore the importance of building a resilient and adaptable transportation system. This detailed understanding of existing conditions will guide the development of the 2025 RTP, ensuring policies and investments are well-aligned with the county's unique context and long-term goals.

ADMIN DRAFT

3 POLICY ELEMENT

The purpose of the Policy Element is to provide guidance to regional transportation decision-makers and promote consistency among State, regional, and local agencies. Consistent with the 2024 RTP Guidelines, the Policy Element is intended to:

- Describe the transportation issues in Sierra as a region.
- Identify and quantify regional needs expressed within both short-term (up to 10 years) and long-term (11-20years) planning horizons.
- Maintain internal consistency with the Financial Element and fund estimates

0.1. TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

0.1.1. Federal Issues

Federal transportation policy and programming provides the direction through which transportation planning decisions are made at the State, regional, and local levels.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

On November 15, 2021, President Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), also known as the bipartisan infrastructure law. The IIJA allocated \$550 billion for new initiatives repairing and upgrading U.S. infrastructure, including to repair roads and bridges, improve public transit, and deliver clean drinking water and high-speed internet, among other provisions. It also reauthorized federal spending on long-standing infrastructure programs for funding highway maintenance, electrical grid upgrades, and water reclamation projects, among others, through 2026.

0.1.2. Statewide Issues

California is dedicated to reducing GHG emissions through sustainable land use and transportation planning. In 2016, the California legislature passed SB 32, codifying a 2030 GHG emissions reduction target of 40% below 1990 levels. The transportation sector accounts for 37% of California's goals of GHG emissions reductions, such as SB 743, described in the following section, which has an impact on the RTP Guidelines and RTP development process. In 2017, transportation

funding increased with the passage of California SB 1, a \$52 billion transportation program funded by increased State gas taxes and vehicle license fees.

Senate Bill 391 and the California Transportation Plan

SB 391 (2009) required the California Department of Transportation to prepare the California Transportation Plan (CTP), the State's long-range transportation plan, by December 2015, to reduce GHG emissions and VMT. The Plan directed that GHG emissions be reduced to 1990 levels from then-current levels by 2020, and 80% below the 1990 levels by 2050 as described by AB 32 and Executive Order (EO) S-03-05. CTP 2050 is a road map for making equitable, transparent, and transformable transportation decisions in California. The CTP 2050 is a long-range policy plan that provides a collective vision for major metropolitan areas, rural areas, and State agencies to achieve critical statewide goals, policies, and recommendations to guide transportation decisions and investments in the twenty-first century that meet future multimodal mobility needs and reduce GHG emissions.

Senate Bill 1 and the Impact on Transportation Funding

In 2016, several bills that would drastically change the financial outlook for transportation funding for the next decade were debated within the State Legislature. The results of those legislative efforts culminated in the Governor's signing of SB 1 on April 28, 2017. In November of 2018, California's Proposition 8 which proposed a repeal of SB 1, was defeated.

SB 1 is a \$52 billion transportation plan funded by increased taxes on gasoline and diesel fuel, and vehicle license fees, including a new fee for vehicles that do not utilize fossil fuels, but do use public roads. The fund is used exclusively for transportation purposes, including maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation of roads and bridges, new bicycle and pedestrian facilities, public transportation, and planning grants.

SB 1 created the following new and augmented programs that fall under CTC guidelines:

- Active Transportation Program (ATP) – \$100 million added annually for bicycle and pedestrian projects
- Local Streets and Roads – \$1.5 billion added annually for road maintenance and rehabilitation
- State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) – \$1.9 billion added annually for projects on State Highways

- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) –This funding source was stabilized; the funds historically received by the SCTC will be restored for eligible projects

Senate Bill 743

In 2013, then-Governor Brown signed SB 743, which created a process to change the way that transportation impacts are analyzed under CEQA. Specifically, SB 743 requires the Office of Planning and Research to amend the CEQA Guidelines to provide an alternative to level of service for evaluating transportation impacts. In 2018 the CEQA Guidelines were amended to include those alternative criteria, and auto delay is no longer considered a significant impact under CEQA. Transportation impacts related to air quality, noise, and safety must be analyzed under CEQA where appropriate. SB 743 also amended congestion management law to allow cities and counties to opt out of level-of-service standards within certain infill areas. The updated 2024 RTP Guidelines established VMT as the primary metric to document vehicular travel. SCTC has reported existing VMT and projected future VMT on critical roadways in the region in this document and will continue to be committed to supporting state and national GHG reduction goals.

California Electric Vehicle Mandate

On September 23, 2020, Governor Newsom signed EO N-79-20, establishing a State goal for 100% of in-state sales of new passenger vehicles and trucks in the State to be zero-emission by 2035. The EO establishes that 100% of new medium- to heavy-duty vehicles in the State be zero-emission by 2045 for all operations where feasible, and by 2035 for new drayage trucks. Transit fleets are also subject to CARB's Innovative Clean Transit Rule, which requires that 25% of new vehicles in small fleets to be zero-emission by 2026, and all new vehicles must meet that standard by 2029. Sierra County has developed a Zero-Emission Bus (ZEB) Rollout Plan in compliance with the California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) regulation, which mandates a full transition to zero-emission bus fleets by 2040.

Senate Bill 960

On September 27, 2024, Governor Newsom Signed SB 960, requiring targets and performance measures that are adopted to include targets and performance measures reflecting state transportation goals and objectives for complete streets assets that reflect the existence and conditions of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit priority facilities on the state highway system.

0.1.3. Regional and Local Issues

Even with new funding guaranteed by SB 1 (the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017), primary local and regional issues revolve around a shortage of funding for maintenance of existing facilities. Additional issues at the local and regional levels include the need for transportation modes other than the automobile, which can enhance accessibility and connectivity between communities and health services, retail, recreational destinations, and employment centers. The following general categories of transportation issues have been identified as:

- Maintenance and improvement of road systems
- Improvements of non-auto transportation modes and programs that lower vehicle emissions, including establishment of an adequate electric grid for use by electric transit vehicles, personal electric vehicles, and electric bicycles
- Adherence to climate GHG reduction targets
- Promotion of economic development within the region

Economic developments efforts should include transportation agencies in their planning decisions to ensure that transportation infrastructure and programs adequately account for an increased demand on the systems. The SCTC will maintain roadways to enable recreational tourism and industrial and commercial activities such as hiking, camping, bicycling, and general tourism, including such infrastructure elements as:

- Road systems with adequate structural strength to support goods movement on a regular basis
- Adequate road width to support the travel and tourism industry

0.1.4. Climate Change and Gas Emissions

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted AB 32, known as the California Global Warming Solutions Act (Section 38560.5 of the Health and Safety Code). The bill established a cap on statewide GHG emissions and set forth the regulatory framework to achieve corresponding reductions in state wide emissions levels. The updated 2017 RTP Guidelines document provides several recommendations for consideration by rural RTPAs to address GHG. The following strategies from the guidelines have been applied towards small counties:

- Emphasize transportation investments in areas where desired land uses as indicated in a city or county general plan may result in VMT reduction or other lower-impact use
- Recognize rural contribution towards GHG reduction for counties that have policies that support development within their cities, and protect agricultural and resource lands
- Consider transportation projects that increase connectivity or provide means to reduce VMT without imposing negative effects on tourism or access to public lands

SB 246 – Climate Change Adaptation

SB 246 (Chapter 606, Statutes of 2015) established the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program under the Office of Planning and Research. This program aims to coordinate local and regional efforts to adapt to climate change with statewide strategies.

SB 350 – Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015

SB 350 (Chapter 547, Statutes of 2015), known as the Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act of 2015, emphasizes the critical role of widespread transportation electrification in achieving climate goals and federal air quality standards. It underscores the importance of ensuring equitable access to zero-emission and near-zero emission vehicles, particularly for disadvantaged and low-to-moderate-income communities. This legislation directs agencies to incorporate these goals into regulations, guidelines, plans, and funding programs aimed at reducing GHG emissions.

Pursuant to PUC 740.12(a)(2), it is the policy of the State and the intent of the legislature to encourage transportation electrification to help achieve ambient air quality standards and the State’s climate goals. Agencies designing and implementing regulations, guidelines, plans, and funding programs to reduce GHG emissions are directed to take the findings described in paragraph (1) of PUC Section 740.12 into account. RTPAs may incorporate the directives from SB 350 in their planning processes.

Executive Orders on Climate Change Issues

Fighting climate change by cutting GHG emissions is one of California’s most important goals. In July 2021, the California State Transportation Agency introduced CAPTI. The 2024 RTP Guidelines require that RTPs be consistent with the CAPTI

goals. This plan outlines suggestions for using discretionary transportation funds to address climate change. CAPTI is rooted in EOs N-19-19 and N-79-20, issued in 2019 and 2020 respectively, which set the framework for these efforts.

EOs regarding climate change establish a crucial framework for RTPAs. Although EOs primarily target State agencies, integrating climate change policies within RTP planning processes supports California's goals of lowering per capita GHG emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Since the last update in 2017, two EOs have been issued to address climate change. EO N-19-19, issued on September 20, 2019, advocates for using the State's investment portfolio to advance climate leadership and establish a framework for climate investments. CAPTI was formulated in response to this EO (Appendix to be included). EO N-79-20, dated September 23, 2020, mandates that all in-state sales of passenger cars and trucks are to be zero-emission by 2035. Additionally, it sets a goal for medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in California to be zero-emission by 2045.

0.2. REGIONAL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The goals, objectives and policies for the 2025 RTP remain unchanged from the 2020 RTP but have been reordered to indicate a shift towards the increased prioritization of multimodal travel, including public transit, bicycling, and walking.

The RTP goals, objectives, and policies were developed to ensure that the Sierra County Region can uphold a regional transportation system within the financial constraints of State, federal, and local funding sources.

0.2.1. State Highways and Regional Roadways

With traffic volumes low and population growth minimal, expanding the traffic capacity of roadways is not now a priority. Of primary importance are safety and operational improvements: According to the Transportation Injury Mapping System, 802 crashes were reported on State Highways between 2012 and 2023. Reducing collision and fatality rates is an important step to address overall safety in the region. As well as safety, of critical concern for the region is the maintenance of regional roadways and connectivity to Butte, Lassen, Plumas, Yuba, Nevada, and Washoe Counties.

0.2.2. Active Transportation

There is a need to enhance Sierra County bicycle and pedestrian facilities for recreational users, tourists, and residents. Wider shoulders, bike lanes, and paths will greatly increase safety, while wayfinding signage and safe crossing areas will improve connectivity between community and tourist destinations. The public input process indicated that providing additional facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians is an important regional transportation need.

Goal 1. Encourage a Safe and Convenient Non-Motorized Transportation System

Objective 1.1 Encourage the development of active transportation that will be convenient to use, easy to access, continuous, safe, and integrated into a multimodal transportation network. Facilities should serve as many segments of the population as possible.

Policy 1.1.1 Include active transportation as part of a complete street transportation program.

Policy 1.1.2 Plan for and provide a continuous and easily accessible bikeway system within the region.

Policy 1.1.3 Seek discretionary funding to implement identified active transportation projects.

Policy 1.1.4 Promote the county as a safe and enjoyable destination for bicycling and pedestrian use. This may include bicycle and pedestrian-related transportation intelligent systems (ITS) applications.

0.2.3. Transit

Sierra Transit Systems operates fixed-route services for Sierra County. This service is heavily used by clients of social service agencies and Feather River College students. According to the ACS, in 2022, only 0.3% of residents 16 years or older took public transportation to get to work, highlighting the need for a more expansive transit system in Sierra County that connects residential areas with employment centers, serves key activity centers and facilities, and offers a viable option to the drive

Goal 2. It is the Goal of SCTC to provide a Comprehensive, Efficient, and Safe Intermodal Transportation System - (Edit Green are goals from 2020 Sierra RTP)

Objective 2.1 Coordinate plans, programs, and projects for the County, State, and Federal transportation systems. Performance measure: level of contact between entities to coordinate transportation system improvements and services, and recognition of State and Federal plans, programs, and projects in county transportation planning documents.

Policy 2.1.1 Provide input to the RTP and recommend that Caltrans utilize the RTP to prioritize maintenance and improvements. Implementation – Letters to and coordinate with Caltrans

Policy 2.1.2 The SCTC should coordinate all transportation proposals, both within Sierra County as well as regional connections, and gain maximum benefits for residents of the region. Implementation – Adoption of the general and regional transportation plan.

Objective 2.2 To the extent practicable and financially sustainable, ensure access of Sierra County residents to vital employment, medical, commercial, and recreational activities. Performance measure: conformity with unmet public transit needs process.

Policy 2.2.1 The highest priority for regional public transportation is to serve the handicapped, elderly, and reduce traffic impacts. Implementation – Continued support of the public transit program.

Policy 2.2.2 The County should encourage non-profit and/or private organizations to operate public transportation services, rather than provide services directly. Implementation – Continued support of Golden Rays and Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County transit programs.

Policy 2.2.3 Encourage applications of non-profit and private enterprise for available transit grant program funds. Implementation – Grant writing assistance for Golden Rays and Incorporated Senior Citizens of Sierra County transit programs.

Policy 2.2.4 Provide transportation services that enhance provision of public services, such as education, job training, medical, and cultural activities. Implementation – Continued support of the public transit program. Explore new transit funding sources.

Policy 2.2.5 Consider including broadband infrastructure as part of roadway projects to allow job creation as well as increased opportunities for telecommuting. Implementation – Consider as part of roadway projects.

Objective 2.3 Provide levels of road maintenance that minimize unnecessary wear and more costly road reconstruction.

Policy 2.3.1 Establish a priority list based on the impact of maintenance; rehabilitation and reconstruction of the existing highway system will receive the highest consideration for available funds.

Goal 3. Support an Effective and Accessible Public Transportation System.

Objective 3.1 Financially support public transportation.

Policy 3.1.1 Identify transit facilities, including bus shelters, staging areas, and transit hubs, and advocate for potential funding sources, such as Transportation Development Act funds, to support improvements to transit-related projects and services.

Policy 3.1.2 Encourage and support the use of public transformation grants from State and Federal programs to the maximum extent possible.

Objective 3.2 Provide accessible transportation service and facilities responsive to the needs of passengers with disabilities or who are young, elderly, and/or with limited means.

Policy 3.2.1 Support and promote accessibility in public transportation to the maximum extent practicable. Implement recommendations from transit plans in the county.

Objective 3.3 Develop a transit system that will be accessible, convenient, dependable, economical and safe; pursue alternative fuels; and will be sensitive to environmental impacts (e.g. air quality).

Policy 3.3.1 Cooperatively develop short-and long-range plans with transit operators that provide guidance and assistance in determining capital and operating requirements.

Policy 3.3.2 Encourage interregional and intercity bus lines to provide more useful schedules into and within Sierra County. This may include ITS applications such as transit/paratransit links and new equipment.

Objective 3.4 Make Efforts to raise awareness, encourage ridership, and create an understanding of how to use transit systems.

Policy 3.4.1 Promote public transportation through social media, personal contact, and other marketing techniques; improve marketing and information programs to assist current ridership and attract potential riders. This may include ITS applications such as the Caltrans Division of Data Service's Cal-ITP program.

Objective 3.5 Encourage the use and implementation of zero-emission busses.

Policy 3.5.1 Identify barriers and limitations of zero-emission busses.

Policy 3.5.2 Purchase and use zero-emission busses in Sierra County.

Policy 3.5.3 Promote the use of renewable and alternatively fueled transportation.

Objective 3.6 Maintain or improve existing general aviation airports to meet federal and state airport license criteria. Performance measure: compliance with federal and state aviation standards.

Policy 3.6.1 Retain Dearwater Airport in Sierraville as a public airport for use by residents and the general public. Implementation – Implement and update master plan.

Objective 3.7 Maintain Roadways at acceptable safety standards.

Policy 3.7.1 Use traffic analysis or other studies to assess whether roadways are operating at the required safety standards. If the required safety standards are not met, strategies or improvements to roadway conditions should be prioritized.

Policy 3.7.2 Provide road and weather condition information to the traveling public.

Policy 3.7.3 The county shall support legislation to increase the state and federal allocations for small funding and seek viable state or federal grants to correct deficiencies. Implementation – Support as needed.

Objective 3.8 Improve parking conditions within Sierra County's activity centers and for visitor rest/information centers. Performance measures: improvement in public parking availability.

Policy 3.8.1 Work towards creation of new parking opportunities, focusing on congested areas (tourists, recreation and other), visitor rest areas, and visitor information areas. Implementation – Parking studies, Capital Improvements Plan and adoption of parking development standards.

Objective 3.9 Identify and secure additional funding sources to support transportation. Performance measure: calculate amount of required funding and percentage obtained.

Policy 3.9.1 Seek funding sources that will support transportation improvements and maintenance. Implementation - Coordinate with state and federal agencies.

Policy 3.9.2 Establish a development fee program to collect funds to pay for roadway improvements necessitated by new development. Implementation – Adoption of a fee development program.

Policy 3.9.3 Proactively pursue available discretionary state and federal funding programs available for safety improvements and rehabilitation. Implementation – Inclusion of discretionary funds in RTP and OWP.

Policy 3.9.4 Participate in efforts to expand federal and state funding for road maintenance funding in rural and recreational areas. Implementation – Participation in state and nationwide coalitions.

Policy 3.9.5 Increase the total mileage of safe bike routes, trails, and pedestrian walkways. Performance measure: Regional multi-use route mileage.

Policy 3.9.6 Support creation of new trails and sidewalks and encourage linkages to public trails and community areas as new development is proposed. Implementation – Review of individual projects and acceptance of trail easements when appropriate. Adopt a street improvement standard that includes sidewalk, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Policy 3.9.7 Provide long-range plans for bicycle use. Implementation – Update the bicycle master plan.

Policy 3.9.8 Study the provision, where warranted, of new multi-purpose non-motorized trails within and between communities, such as along levees and old right-of-way segments. Implementation – Develop specific study of potential facilities.

Policy 3.9.9 Where warranted by bicycle activity and where feasible given financial and physical constraints, provide paved shoulders along roadways for bicycle use as part of roadway reconstruction or new construction projects. Implementation – Ongoing consideration as part of roadway design processes.

Policy 3.9.10 Reduce conflicts generated by bicycle events on county and state routes. Implementation – Coordination with Sheriff's department, CHP, emergency response agencies, and bicycle interests. Construction of "trailhead to downtown" connector trail in Downieville.

Objective 3.10 Achieve and maintain scenic roadway designation for appropriate state and county highways/roads. Performance measure: Miles of roadway with scenic highway or scenic byway designation.

Policy 3.10.1 In accordance with the visual element of the general plan, prohibit offsite outdoor advertising along scenic highways and byways. Implementation – Conformity with visual element and with scenic highway/byway guidelines.

Objective 3.11 Provide for safe, efficient distribution of goods and services to Sierra County communities. Performance measure: Vehicle and truck counts and crash rates at state highway entrances to Sierra County.

Policy 3.11.1 Maintain state highways to a level that is safe for truck traffic. Implementation – State highway rehabilitation projects.

Goal 4. It is the goal of the SCTC to maintain a system safe system for truck traffic, within the existing roadway network, that preserves the rural quality of life of county residents.

Policy 4.1.1 SCTC's highest priorities for all road improvements are driver, bicyclist and pedestrian safety, increasing safety on curves and narrow roads, and improving access to existing development areas. Implementation – Yearly budget process.

Objective 4.2 Program improvements to the transportation system which improve traffic, bicyclist, and pedestrian safety at locations with high rates of accidents, through elimination of hazards or potential hazards. Performance measure: Countywide accident rate per million vehicle miles of travel. Strategic Highway Safety Plan goals.

Policy 4.2.1 Develop a continuing program to install guardrails to improve curve safety on State highways. Implementation – Capital Development Program and annual interface with Caltrans at General Plan progress report session.

Policy 4.2.2 Provide road widening and turnout areas on all existing one-lane roads to improve safety and traffic flow as new development is proposed. Implementation – Review of individual projects.

Policy 4.2.3 Ensure adequate access to existing or proposed developed areas by conforming to the Public Resources Code 4290 Fire Safety Requirements. Implementation – Conformity with Fire Safety Requirements.

Policy 4.2.4 Provide improvements to existing roads when needed to ensure safety. Implementation – Capital Improvements Program on a five-year cycle.

Policy 4.2.5 Consider the need for rail crossing improvements when development projects are proposed within the vicinity of a rail corridor. Implementation – Development approval process.

Policy 4.2.6 Actively ensure that hazardous waste management is current with State and Federal laws. Implementation – Annual review of county Hazardous Waste Management, adoption of the General Plan and coordination with the California Highway Patrol and Caltrans.

Objective 4.3 Maximize the level of year-round access on the county roadway system. Performance measure: Minimize mileage of county roadways not maintained in winter.

Policy 4.3.1 Maintain as many roads as year-round travel as budget will allow and which are not in conflict with winter recreational plans. Implementation – Annual budget process.

Objective 4.4 Identify anticipated street and road congestion/capacity problems before they become critical to program preventive measures and reduce the cost of correction. Performance measure: Roadways and intersections LOS.

Policy 4.4.1 LOS C as defined in the 6th edition of the *Highway Capacity Manual* (2016) shall be the target on all roadways (state and county). Implementation – Ongoing. Development Review, adoption of appropriate development fees, capital improvement program, annual General Plan progress.

Policy 4.4.2 Proactively review and comment on development projects in adjacent counties with potential traffic and air quality impacts on Sierra County, and coordinate with other counties regarding equitable mitigation of impacts in the county. Implementation – Participation in environmental review and permitting process for applicable development proposals.

Policy 4.4.3 Cooperate with the USFS to reduce traffic impacts which would impact either jurisdiction, and to resolve differences in USFS and county road management objectives. Implementation – Respond as proposals are made.

Policy 4.4.4 Require and expect property owners to maintain new residential roads; the county is generally not interested in accepting new residential roads for maintenance due to funding restrictions. Evaluate road maintenance agreement (including those in CC & Rs) to ensure that Homeowners Associations or other appropriate entities will be funded adequately to maintain private roads. Consider acceptance of private road offers of easement dedication. Implementation – Review of individual projects.

Objective 4.5 Program improvements to the transportation system which prevent further deterioration of the existing system and provide priority to preventive maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction projects over enhancements projects. Performance measure: Countywide Road pavement condition.

Policy 4.5.1 Maintenance of the existing system should be assured prior to considering the construction of new county-maintained roadways. New major roadways are not desired. Implementation – Adoption of the General Plan and ongoing development review.

Policy 4.5.2 The County should provide the maintenance and minor improvements needed to perpetuate its system of safe rural roads. Implementation – Annual budget process.

Policy 4.5.3 Bridge structures should be repaired, reinforced, or replaced as needed on a basis compatible with existing roadway widths and architecture. Upgraded standards should be used only, if necessary, for safety reasons or if needed to obtain state and federal funding. Implementation – Oversight of proposals by other agencies and internal use of this policy by Public Works Department.

Policy 4.5.4 Encourage the Forest Service to adequately maintain National Forest roads which are utilized by recreationalists, logging trucks, and other traffic. Implementation – Yearly progress report session at annual General Plan review, and subsequent correspondence if needed.

Objective 4.6 Develop road systems that are compatible with the areas they serve. Performance measure: Roadway/intersection LOS and consistency with adopted roadway standards.

Policy 4.6.1 Develop policy on speed limit control, reduction, and enforcement on state roads with pass through communities. Implementation – Review individual projects.

Policy 4.6.2 Develop public and private roadway standards consistent with the Roadway Classifications chart in the General Plan Circulation Element that ensures safety balanced with environmental concerns. Implementation – Develop County Road Standards.

Policy 4.6.3 Designate commercial hauling routes through developed areas. Implementation – Review and adopt a county ordinance setting specific performance standards for commercial traffic through existing communities.

Objective 4.7 Maintain the natural and historic characteristics of the region that makes Sierra County attractive to both residents and visitors. Performance measure: Impact of roadway system on countywide of Capital Improvement Plan.

Policy 4.7.1 Transportation improvements for recreation travel should be directed toward development and protection of scenic routes and support the local economy. Implementation – Consistency of Capital Improvements Plan.

Policy 4.7.2 Ensure that new roadway development and circulation improvements are designed with the goals of the “least possible” impact in mind. For example, special standards should be used in the following cases: Implementation – Consistency of Capital Improvements Plan.

- Along Waterways
- Adjacent to steep slopes which would require extensive cut/fill.
- Adjacent to wetlands
- Where visually important specimen trees of tree standard exist
- At existing bridges, especially to preserve historical one lane bridges of Downieville
- Along scenic highways

Policy 4.7.3 Recognize that California Department of Forestry (CDF) road design standards for fire safety will result in unwanted environmental impacts in many instances, restricting land uses to areas where road development to these standards will result in least impact. Implementation – Ongoing development review and adoption of Land Use Diagram consistent with this concern.

Policy 4.7.4 Develop standards that require erosion control plans, including use of Best Management Practices for runoff control, be prepared for all new roadways designs and circulation improvements projects. Improvements – Creation of new Development Standards along with updated Zoning Ordinance.

Policy 4.7.5 Develop Special roadway standards for steep slopes and environmentally sensitive areas. Implementation – Creation of new Development Standards along with updated Zoning Ordinance.

Policy 4.7.6 Support efforts of the Federal and State government to reduce conditions on transportation funding which would require the county to use design standards higher than county standards. Implementation – Respond as proposals are made.

Policy 4.7.7 Actively oppose USFS road management objectives which conflict with county goals. Implementation – Respond as proposals are made.

Goal 5. It is the goal of the county to prevent growth inducement along transportation corridors that is consistent with existing land use patterns.

Objective 5.1 Avoid the provision of roadway capacity (such as through road corridor expansion) over that required to safely accommodate existing and planned land uses identified in the General Plan. Performance measure: Existing or forecast LOS and VMT along roadway corridors.

Policy 5.1.1 Oppose the development of high-speed thoroughfares on new or existing federal, state or county-maintained roads, Implementation – Ongoing oversight of proposals by other agencies.

Policy 5.1.2 Oppose the development of major new roads (other than local roads to serve residential development) or major improvements to existing state, federal, or county roads which would be required by higher standards, higher design speeds, or expanded capacity over those normally acceptable to the county. Implementation – Ongoing oversight of proposals by other agencies.

Goal 6. Consider all types of environmental impacts as part of the transportation project selection process. Ensure that transportation projects will meet environmental quality standards set by Federal, State, and Local Resources agencies.

Objective 6.1 Reduce GHG emissions from transportation related sources in Sierra County from 2020 levels by 2030 to support the state's efforts to AB-32 and to mitigate the impact of climate change.

Policy 6.1.1 Consider VMT and corresponding GHG emissions as part of every transportation capital improvement project decision.

Policy 6.1.2 Establish a baseline inventory of GHG emissions from all transportation related sources.

Policy 6.1.3 Establish a climate Action Plan that includes measures to reduce GHG emissions to target levels.

Policy 6.1.4 Aggressively pursue projects with positive GHG impacts and that are realistic given the very rural nature of Sierra County, including transit ridesharing programs, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, Intelligent Transportation System strategies, and maintenance of existing roadways to reduce vehicle emissions.

Objective 6.2 Fund transportation related projects which avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to the environment.

Policy 6.2.1 Determine the impact of the project on biological resources, hydrology, geology, cultural resources, climate change and air quality prior to construction. If necessary, mitigate the impacts according to natural resource agency standards.

0.2.4. Aviation

Promoting general and commercial aviation facilities and services already in place that complement the countywide and regional transportation system are necessary for the pursuit of economic and development opportunities, including goal of increasing tourism. At a minimum, maintenance of general aviation facilities is essential.

Goal 7. Promote Aviation Facilities

Objective 7.1 Maintain and enhance existing airports and airstrips.

Policy 7.1.1 Seek all available funding sources for airport maintenance and enhancement and implement capital improvement plans and projects identified as part of the California Aviation System Plan, System Needs Assessment Element.

Policy 7.1.2 Promote land use compatibility with the surrounding environment for each airport, through cooperation with the Aviation Land Use Commission.

Policy 7.1.3 Encourage and foster effective and efficient use of existing airport facilities including new partnership with third-party agencies and regional services, including commercial aviation and shuttle services.

0.2.5. Rail

Railroad operations have long been a part of the Sierra County landscape and transportation infrastructure. Railroad operations in the County remain used solely for freight movement. While an interest in interregional railroad service for personal travel and for tourism has been noted, the benefit-to-cost ratio remains low

0.2.6. Climate Change and Environmental Justice

In California, transportation accounts for 37% of GHG emissions. Transportation strategies to reduce GHG emissions include reducing, managing, and eliminating non-essential trips, through smart land use, ITS, demand management, and market-based manipulation strategies. It is important that the regional transportation and land use decision-makers pursue projects that adhere to adopted State strategies and regional efforts to meet GHG emissions reduction targets

0.2.7. Tribal Transportation

There are two federally recognized active Tribes within the Sierra-Plumas region including the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California; and although located outside of Sierra County in Plumas County, the Greenville Rancheria of Maidu Indians is traditionally included in tribal outreach in Sierra County due to historical ties. The SCTC maintains communication with these tribes, especially when considering transportation decisions, and recognizes the importance of a collaborative process to ensure that policies, projects, and implementation methods reflect the needs and desires of tribes that may be affected by these decisions.

Goal 8. Tribal Residents Within the Sierra Region will Have Safe, Effective, Functional, Transportation Systems, Including Streets, Roads, Pedestrian, Bicycle Facilities, and Transit.

Objective 8.1 Implement activities and plans knowledgeably and sensitively, in a manner respectful of Tribal sovereignty.

Policy 8.1.1 Consult with and involve Tribes during the development of planning documents.

Policy 8.1.2 Provide Tribes with information regarding Federal, State, and local transportation grant programs for which they may qualify.

Objective 8.2 Establish clear, ongoing, and open communication with Tribes

Policy 8.2.1 Meet with Tribes to review the status of the government-to-government relationships and exchange information as appropriate.

Objective 8.3 Provide a transportation network that safely and sufficiently provides access between Tribal lands and their surrounding communities.

Policy 8.3.1 Coordinate with Tribes to consider financial partnerships on projects and grants that serve tribal lands.

Policy 8.3.2 Coordinate with Tribes and surrounding communities to identify safety concerns within the region.

4 ACTION ELEMENT

The Action Element presents a plan to address the needs of and issues surrounding each transportation mode, in accordance with the goals, objectives, and policies set forth in the Policy Element. The Action Element also highlights the programs, policies, technical assistance, investments, and other actions to support RTP strategies and goals.

In the Action Element, projects and programs are categorized as short- or long-range improvements, consistent with identified needs and policies. These plans are based on the existing conditions, forecasts for future conditions, and transportation needs discussed in the first three sections of this RTP. The project capacity of the RTP has not been increased since the issuance of the 2020 Sierra RTP.

4.1. PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

The RTP Guidelines and supplement to the RTP Guidelines adopted by the CTC require that an RTP “provide a clearly defined justification for its transportation projects and programs.” This requirement is often referred to as either the “project intent statement” or “project purpose and need.” A project’s “need” is an identified transportation deficiency or problem, and its “purpose” is the set of objectives that will be met to address the transportation deficiency. Each table of projects included in the Action Element contributes to system preservation, capacity enhancement, safety, and/or multimodal enhancements. The intent of improvements in each category is described below.

The purpose of the RTP is to provide a vision for the region, supported by transportation goals, for 10-year (2035) and 20-year (2045) planning horizons. The 10-year planning blocks allow for consistency with the STIP, which operates on 5-year cycles. The RTP documents policy direction, actions, and funding strategies designed to maintain and improve the regional transportation system.

The broad categories of system preservation, capacity enhancement, safety, and/or multimodal enhancements capture the intended outcome for projects during the life of the RTP and serve to enhance and protect “livability” for residents in the County. Projects and funding listed in this Action Element are consistent with the Interregional Transportation Improvement program.

4.1.1. REGIONAL PRIORITIES

Maintenance and Improvement Emphasis

In Sierra County, the limited available funding is focused on maintaining existing facilities across all modes. Multimodal improvements for the transit system, aviation facilities, bikeway and pedestrian facilities, and the goods movement system will serve to implement a balanced multimodal transportation network, improve air quality, and help accommodate future travel demand in the region. Should a capacity-increasing project become a regional priority, it would be initiated only when fully or largely funded by revenue sources that otherwise could not be used for maintenance activities. Other capital projects can only be implemented after new funding sources become available to allow full funding of ongoing maintenance responsibilities. The region has a limited capacity to fund and implement large projects due to funding and staffing constraints.

Maintain Connectivity to Adjacent Counties

Maintaining the connections to Plumas County via SR-89 and SR-49, Nevada County via SR-89, Yuba County via SR-49, is necessary to provide access to key destinations outside of Sierra County. These connections are critical for the economy, health, and safety of the residents and visitors to Sierra County

Regionally Significant Projects

Regionally significant projects for Sierra County include Smithneck Creek Road Reconstruction. Smithneck Creek Road is the only year-round access for the Sierra Brooks Community and is a major recreational access point for Tahoe National Forest and Toiyabe National Forest. Road conditions have deteriorated from long term usage, with winter weather causing significant damage through freeze/thaw cycles, and gaps in road fill causing water and freeze to increase the degradation of the road surface, creating hazardous driving conditions.

Along with roadway rehabilitation the Smithneck Creek Road project will also provide additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities between SR 49 and the Sierra Brooks subdivision, an added spur will bring a connection to the Smithneck Creek County Park which is south of the subdivision. A bicycle route will be added along Smithneck Road (County Road S860. The proposed route will be class 2 between SR 49 and Antelope Valley Road, class 3 through the Sierra Brooks subdivision, and then class 2 between Bear Valley Road and Smithneck Creek County Park. An additional pedestrian safety measure may also be included as a crosswalk with advanced signage at or near the intersection of SR 49 and Smithneck Road.

4.1.2. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Addressing transportation safety in a regional planning document can enhance the health, economic, and quality-of-life outcomes for residents of and visitors to Sierra County. In response to safety issues, Caltrans crafted a Strategic Highway Safety Plan with one primary safety goal: to reduce roadway fatalities to less than one fatality per one hundred million VMT. The Plan concentrates on 15 “Challenge Areas” concerning transportation safety in California. For each Challenge Area, it provides background data, establishes specific goals, considers strategies to achieve those goals, and discusses institutional issues that could affect goal implementation. The policy aspect of this RTP incorporates safety goals and objectives that are in line with the California Strategic Highway Safety Plan and addresses regional safety needs.

4.1.3. SIERRA COUNTY STRATEGIES TO PREPARE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The Sierra region faces more hazardous weather and weather-related events in the coming decades as a result of climate change. Potential hazards to the transportation infrastructure include increased severity and frequency of storms, droughts, and wildfires, which may have direct and/or indirect impacts on the transportation system in Sierra County. SCTC is taking proactive approaches to mitigate any such impacts, one example being the Wildfires Long-Term Recovery Plan, which identifies priority projects and recovery values after the devastating Dixie Fire. Some projects include:

- Health and Social Services
- Infrastructure
- Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Tribal Integration and Needs
 - Habitat, Forest, and Watershed Restoration
 - Historic and Cultural Site Restoration for Social Engagement
- Economic
 - Biomass Product and Wood Utilization Innovation
 - Connected Communities Project
 - Gathering Places as Economic Drivers – Elevate Existing and Create New
 - Tourism Strategy – Leveraging Partnerships with Like Minded Organizations
 - Housing and Commercial Buildings

- Housing Recovery Grant Programs
- Resident Attainable Workforce Housing Development
- Tourism Visitor and Seasonal Workforce Housing Opportunities
- Construction Trades Workforce Training Program
- Informing Development and Land Use Patterns

4.1.4. TRANSPORTATION SECURITY/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Transportation security and emergency preparedness address issues associated with large-scale evacuation due to a natural disaster or terrorist attack. Achieving the highest levels of emergency preparedness would include maintaining and improving roadways, airport facilities, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and public transit services. Most short- and long-range projects identified for the region have an emphasis on maintenance and operational improvements. In addition to maintaining facilities vital for the region's safe evacuation, emergency preparedness involves training and education as well as planning appropriate responses to possible emergencies.

4.1.5. TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Transportation systems management (TSM) is a term used to describe low-cost actions that maximize the efficiency of existing transportation facilities and systems. Urbanized areas can implement strategies using various combinations of techniques. Sierra County looks for the most effective and least capital-intensive solutions. On a project basis, TSM measures are in use to increase traffic flow efficiency and movement through intersections and along highways. Long-range TSM considerations can include:

- Signing and striping modification
- Parking restrictions
- Paving and re-striping areas to facilitate off-street parking
- Installing or modifying signals to provide alternate circulation routes for residents
- Re-examining speed zones on certain streets

These types of actions will remain part of the RTP and General Plan planning process for the next 20 years.

4.1.6. INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (ITS)

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations section 940.3, encompasses “electronics, communications, or information processing used singly or in combination to improve the efficiency or safety of a surface transportation system.” Its use is a priority for the U.S. Department of Transportation as a key component of the nationwide implementation of the National ITS Architecture, which is a framework devised to encourage functional harmony, interoperability, and integration among local, regional, State, and federal ITS applications. ITS includes technological improvements that enhance the safety and reliability of roadways. Common examples include highway advisory radio and changeable message signs that provide information on detours; delays; road closures, whether temporary or seasonal; weather conditions; and chain requirements. ITS projects complement other transportation strategies. Benefits and cost assessments need to be considered at an early stage in system or project planning to justify the deployment of technologies. As technology has changed, ITS emphasis has shifted from internal operational improvements to coordination with external agencies. Interagency cooperation that enables all agencies to achieve their missions more effectively is the major objective of the Regional ITS Architecture. The proposed ITS technologies have the potential to strengthen efforts that ensure safe, efficient, and functional transportation systems for all modes of travel in the County. Key ITS applications that exist in various locations in Sierra County are included below. In addition, SCTC continues to look for any other new or emerging ITS technologies that could be implemented

- Transit and traveler Information (e.g., telephone and web-based travel information and mobility centers) disseminates public transportation service information to a wider variety of users across a larger network of public transportation service providers.
- Highway advisory information signage allows for coordination between the County, law enforcement agencies, and Caltrans to disseminate current highway conditions to the public.

4.1.7. PROJECT LISTS

Projects included in the RTP are categorized as either short- or long-range projects. The short-range projects (2025-2035) are shown in tables 4.1-4.6. Complete project tables including short- and long-range projects can also be found in Appendix A.

ADMIN DRAFT

4.1.8. Roadway Projects

**TABLE 4.1
SIERRA COUNTY ROADWAY PROJECTS**

Funding Source	Roadway Name	City	Description	Cost Last RTP	Cost (2025)	Source
STIP	Railroad Ave.	Loyalton	Construct segment Railroad Ave North from SR 49	\$1,142,000	\$1,233,360	2020 RTP
STIP	Various	Loyalton	Construct sidewalks on all Loyalton streets without sidewalks.	\$1,142,000	\$1,233,360	2020 RTP
STIP	Various	Goodyears Bar	Rehabilitate and reconstruct streets.	\$1,827,000	\$1,973,160	2020 RTP
STIP	Lemon Canyon Rd.	Sierraville	Rehabilitate pavement	\$1,599,000	\$1,726,920	2020 RTP
STIP	Campbell Hot Springs Rd.	Sierraville	Rehabilitate and construct road	\$1,599,000	\$1,726,920	2020 RTP
STIP	Main St.,	Downieville, SR 49	Downieville Main St. SR 49 reconstruct ped way and rehab	\$3,426,000	\$3,700,080	2020 RTP
STIP	Salmon Lake Road	Gold Lake Road to Salmon Lake	Rehabilitate	\$731,000	\$789,480	2020 RTP
STIP	Sardine Lake Road	Gold Lake Road to Sardine Lake	Rehabilitate	\$799,000	\$862,920	2020 RTP
STIP	Packer Lake Road	Gold Lake Road to Packer Lake	Rehabilitate	\$1,827,000	\$1,973,160	2020 RTP
STIP	Hennes Pass Rd.	Pliocene Rd. to Cornish Camp	Rehabilitate	\$4,568,000	\$4,933,440	2020 RTP
STIP	Ridge Road	SR 49 to Pliocene	Overlay	\$5,710,000	\$6,166,800	2020 RTP
STIP	Forest City Road	Pliocene to Forest	Reconstruct and rehabilitate	\$17,131,000	\$18,501,480	2020 RTP
STIP	Mountain House Rd.	SR 49 to Forest	Reconstruct and rehabilitate	\$10,279,000	\$11,101,320	2020 RTP
STIP	Brandy City Road	SR 49 to Brandy City	Reconstruct and rehabilitate	\$5,710,000	\$6,166,800	2020 RTP
STIP	Streets of Calpine	Various	Pavement overlay	\$2,284,000	\$2,466,720	2020 RTP
STIP	Streets of Sierraville	Various	Pavement overlay	\$2,284,000	\$2,466,720	2020 RTP
STIP	Streets of Downieville	Main St, School St, Sunnyside, Pearl Ave, Maiden, Ponta Ranch, River St, East River, Nevada St, Commercial, Belle St	Pavement overlay	\$3,426,000	\$3,700,080	2020 RTP
STIP	Streets of Sierra City	Various	Pavement overlay	\$2,284,000	\$2,466,720	2020 RTP
STIP	Streets of Alleghany	Various	Pavement overlay	\$1,713,000	\$1,850,040	2020 RTP
STIP	Stampede Reservoir Road	SR 89 to Stampede Dam	Pavement overlay	\$799,000	\$862,920	2020 RTP
STIP	Long Valley Rd.	I-80 to US 395	Reconstruct and rehabilitate	\$5,710,000	\$6,166,800	2020 RTP
STIP	Lavezzola Rd.	East Main St. to Empire Ranch, Downieville	Reconstruct and rehabilitate	\$10,279,000	\$11,101,320	2020 RTP
STIP	Saddleback Rd.	SR 49 to Saddleback Lookout	Reconstruct and rehabilitate	\$10,279,000	\$11,101,320	2020 RTP
STIP	Sierraville Visitor Center	Sierraville	Construct visitor center including traveler's information kiosk, public restrooms, paved parking lot and enhancement including sidewalks/paths, picnic area, landscaping	\$505,000	\$545,400	2020 RTP
Total County Roadway Projects				\$ 97,053,000	\$ 104,817,240	

Table 4.1 shows current short-range and roadway projects for agencies in Sierra County. The long-range projects can be found in Appendix A.

4.1.9. Bridge Projects

TABLE 4.2 SIERRA COUNTY BRIDGE PROJECTS					
Number	Funding Source	Roadway Name	Description	Const. Year (FY)	Cost
13C0003	STIP/HBP	Pearl Street	Pearl Street Bridge at Downieville River, at Downieville	2020-2025	\$ 4,643,000
13C0052	STIP/HBP	Port Wine Ridge Road	Port Wine Ridge Road Bridge at Cedar Grove Ravine	2020-2025	\$ 1,310,000
13C0050	STIP/HBP	Port Wine Ridge Road	Port Wine Ridge Road at Rock Creek Tributary	2020-2025	\$ 218,000
13C0046	STIP/HBP	Wild Plum Road	Sierra City - Wild Plum Road Bridge at N. Fork Yuba River	2020-2025	\$ 2,341,000
13C0054	STIP/HBP	Brandy City Road	Brandy City Road Bridge at Cherokee Creek	2020-2025	\$ 2,033,000
13C0043	STIP/HBP	Moutain House Road	Mtn.House Rd. Br. At Rock Creek	2020-2025	\$ 126,000
13C0019	STIP/HBP	Port Wine Ridge Road	Port Wine Ridge Road Bridge at Rock Creek	2020-2025	\$ 228,000
13C0037	STIP/HBP	Post Office Spur	Post Office Spur at Goodyears Creek	2020-2025	\$ 228,000
13C0045	STIP/HBP	Lavezzola Road	Lavezzola Road Bridge at Lavezzola Creek	2020-2025	\$ 228,000
13C0055	STIP/HBP	Main Street, Downieville	Main Street Cr S500 at Downie River	2020-2025	\$ 228,000
New Bridge	STIP/HBP	Independence Lake Road	Independence Lake Road - New bridge on Independence Lake to replace existing low water crossing and revitalize Perazzo Meadows	2020-2025	\$ 1,200,000
Total Long-Range Bridge Projects					\$ 12,783,000

4.1.10. Transit Projects

The following table shows the short-range operating and capital transit projects planned in Sierra County. Over \$300,000 in short-range transit needs have been identified in Sierra County.

Funding Source	Project Name	Year	Cost
STA / PTMISEA	Purchase Two Vans	2019	\$ 112,000
STA / PTMISEA	Replace Public Transit Vehicles at End of Useful Life	2021	\$ 122,000
STA	Sheltered Storage for Transit Buses	TBD	N/A
JARC, New Freedom, 5310/Local	Hire Mobility Manager for Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Projects (cost per year)	TBD	\$ 43,000
New Freedom, 5310/Local	Volunteer Driver Transportation Reimbursement Program (cost per year)	TBD	\$ 26,000
Total Transit Projects			\$ 303,000

4.1.II. Aviation Projects

The following table shows short-range aviation projects in Sierra County. A total of just over 2 million in short-range needs have been identified in Sierra County. The long-range aviation projects can be found in Appendix A.

Table 4.4: Aviation Projects

TABLE 4.4				
SIERRA COUNTY AIRPORT PROJECTS				
Funding Source	Project Name	Description	Const. Year (FY)	Cost
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	Runway Reconstruction	24/25	\$ 600,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	Reconstruct Apron	24/25	\$ 400,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	Construct turnaround: Runway 3	24/25	\$ 30,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	Widen Runway to 60 Feet	24/25	\$ 210,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	ALP Master Plan	24/25	\$ 18,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	New Parallel Taxiway-One Half Length #1	24/25	\$ 330,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	New Parallel Taxiway-One Half Length #2	24/25	\$ 330,000
FTA/State	Deerwater Improvements	Land Acquisition for Aviation Easement	24/25	\$ 180,000
Total Airport Projects				\$ 2,098,000

4.1.12. Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

The following table shows the short-range bicycle and pedestrian project planned for Sierra County. Due to a severe lack of funding, only one project is currently identified under the short-range category. Most active transportation projects do not yet have identified funding sources and will be implemented as funding permits.

TABLE 4.6
SIERRA COUNTY BIKE/PED PROJECTS

Funding Source	Region/Area	Description	Project Type	Project Length	Const. Year (FY)	Cost
ATP	Sierra Valley	Beckwith Road (A-24)	Widen Shoulders/Signage	2.5	2020-2024	\$ 658,000
ATP/STIP	Loyalton	SR 49 Loyalton Vicinity	Widen Shoulders/Signage	2	2020-2024	\$ 526,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	SR 49 Sattley to Sierraville	Widen Shoulders/Signage	4	2020-2024	\$ 1,053,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	Westside Road (A-23)	Widen Shoulders/Signage	7	2020-2024	\$ 1,842,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	SR 49 Sierraville to Loyalton	Widen Shoulders/Signage	12.4	2020-2024	\$ 3,263,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	SR 49 Loyalton to Plumas County Line	Widen Shoulders/Signage	2.3	2020-2024	\$ 605,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	Calpine Road	Widen Shoulders/Signage	1.27	2020-2024	\$ 334,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	SR 89 from Calpine Road to SR 49	Widen Shoulders/Signage	3	2020-2024	\$ 789,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	SR 49/89 from SR 89 intersection to Sattley	Widen Shoulders/Signage	0.9	2020-2024	\$ 237,000
ATP/STIP	West County	SR 49 from Yuba County line to Yuba Pass	Widen Shoulders/Signage	34	2020-2024	\$ 8,947,000
ATP/STIP	Sierra Valley	SR 89 from Plumas County Line to Calpine	Widen Shoulders/Signage	6.8	2020-2024	\$ 1,789,000
ATP/STIP	Yuba Pass	SR 49 from Bassets to SR 89 junction	Widen Shoulders/Signage	13	2020-2024	\$ 3,421,000
ATP/STIP	Gold Lakes	Gold Lake Hwy from Bassetts to Plumas County line	Widen Shoulders/Signage	7.8	2020-2024	\$ 2,052,000
ATP/STIP	Downieville	Downieville - Downhill trailhead to parking area	New Multi-Use	1	2020-2024	
ATP/STIP	Countywide	Countywide Wayfinding and informational signage	Signage	N/A	2020-2024	\$ 18,000
ATP	Downieville	Downieville Visitors Center and Merchants	Bicycle Racks	N/A	2020-2024	\$ 11,000
ATP	Countywide	Schools	Bicycle Racks	N/A	2020-2024	\$ 11,000
ATP	Countywide	Bicycle Map	Marketing/Information	N/A	2020-2024	\$ 4,000
Total Bike/Ped Projects						\$ 25,560,000

4.1.13. Transit Projects

The following table shows the short-range operating and capital transit projects planned in Sierra County. Over \$300,000 in short-range transit needs have been identified in Sierra County. Caltrans State Highway Operations and Protections Program (SHOPP).

SHOPP is a state program administered through Caltrans. A total of \$29.24 million in project needs has been identified for State Highways in Sierra County, representing both the total project costs and the funding allocated through the SHOPP program for the usual 0–5 year SHOPP period.

4.2. PROGRAM-LEVEL PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The Rural County Task Force completed a study on the use of statewide performance measure indicators for the 26 RTPAs in California to evaluate their applicability to rural and small urban areas like Sierra County; the study identified and recommended measures that would best suit the unique conditions and resources available in these locales. These performance measures continue to help in the selection of RTP project priorities and in monitoring how well the transportation system functions.

The following standards guided the selection of performance measures for this RTP:

1. Performance measures align with California transportation goals and objectives.
2. Performance measures are consistent with the current goals and objectives of Sierra County.
3. Performance measures are applicable to Sierra County as a rural area.
4. Performance measures can be linked to specific decisions on transportation investments.
5. Performance measures do not impose substantial resource requirements on Sierra County.

Program-level performance measures are used to help select RTP project priorities and to monitor how well the transportation system functions. The aim of each performance measure and its location within the RTP are described herewith.

4.2.1. Performance Measure 1 – Congestion/Delay/Vehicle Miles Traveled

This performance measure monitors how well State Highways function, based on peak volume, capacity, and VMT. The data is reported annually and as a trend beginning in the year 2000. Monitoring this performance measure requires minimal resources as data for the State Highway System is readily available. Not all locations are reported annually in Caltrans vehicle reports; thus some 'current' data may be more outdated for some roadway sections. This performance measure is reasonably accurate for the State Highway System and may be used in a cost/benefit analysis that includes additional calculations such as travel time delay as a function of time-of-day directional volume/capacity ratio.

The county and incorporated cities do not track VMT. However, Caltrans does incorporate average daily traffic data from the County and is included in the Caltrans Vehicle report in a tabled "Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) mileage summary by Functional Classification, Population and Net Land Area." Because rural areas contain population centers of less than 5,000 people or have areas below a population density of 1,000 people per square mile, VMT is not reported on local roadways.

Desired outcome and RTP/State goals:

- Measure of overall vehicle activity and use of the roadway network
- Input maintenance and system preservation
- Input to safety
- Input health-based pollutant reduction, Input GHG reduction
- RTP Goals 1,2,3,6

4.2.2. Performance Measure 2 – Preservation/Service Fuel Use/Travel Use/Travel Distance/Time/Cost

This performance measure monitors the condition of the roadway in Sierra County through pavement conditions. Pavement conditions should be monitored every 2 years. This performance measure should have a high level of accuracy which can be indirectly used in estimating the costs of bringing all roadways up to a minimum acceptable condition.

Desired outcome and RTP/ State goals:

- Safety
- System Preservation

- Accessibility
- Reliability
- Productivity
- Return on Investment
- RTP Goals: 1, 2, 3

4.2.3. Performance Measure 3 – Mode Share/Split

This performance measure monitors transportation mode and mode share to understand how State and County road's function based on modes used. The data is reported as a trend over time from 2000 and does not require a high level of additional resource requirements. Although the data is less accurate for smaller counties, the data is reasonable accurate in Sierra County. This performance measure cannot be used as a benefit/cost analysis.

Desired outcome and RTP/State goals:

- Multimodal
- Efficiency
- GHG reduction
- RTP goals: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

4.2.4. Performance Measure 4 – Safety

Addressing transportation safety in a regional planning document can improve health, financial, and quality of life issues for the public. There is a need to establish methods to proactively improve the safety of the transportation network.

This performance measure monitors safety through the total accident cost and should be reviewed annually. To obtain a full picture of this data, staff may be required to access secondary data sources. Reasonably accurate data can be used directly for benefit/cost analysis. The County tracks the number of collisions on local roads and compiles the data to identify locations that need safety improvements. California Statewide Integrated Traffic Records System data from CHP is used to monitor the number of fatal and injury collisions by location to identify needed improvements.

Desired outcomes and RTP/State goals:

- Establish baseline values for the number of fatal collisions and injuries per average daily traffic on select roadways over the past three years
- Monitor the number, location, and severity of collisions. Recommended improvements to reduce incidence and severity
- Work with Caltrans to reduce the number of collisions on State Highways in Sierra County
- Completion of projects identified in the TCRs and RTP
- RTP goals: 1, 2, 3

4.2.5. Performance Measure 5 – Transit

This performance measure monitors the cost-effectiveness of transit in Sierra County and is reported to the Sierra County Transit Agency Board. In accordance with section 99405(c) of the Public Utilities Code and the Transportation Development Act, the Transit Agency Board adopted resolution 11-2002, the alternative performance criteria for the transit system in lieu of the 10% Fare Box Recovery ratio. The criteria adopted was the actual cost per passenger which is an accurate and tangible measurement.

Desired outcome and RTP/State goals:

- Increase productivity
- Increase efficiency
- Reduce the cost per passenger
- RTP Goals: 3, 6

4.2.6. Performance Measure 6 – Roadway Conditions

This performance measure monitors the cost-effectiveness of transit in Sierra County and is reported to the Sierra County Transit Agency Board. In accordance with section 99405© of the Public Utilities Code and the Transportation Development Act, the Transit Agency Board adopted resolution 11-2002, the alternative performance criteria for the transit system in lieu of the 10% Fare Box Recovery ratio. The criteria adopted was the actual cost per passenger which is an accurate and tangible measurement.

Desired outcome and RTP/State goals:

- Increase productivity
- Increase efficiency
- Reduce the cost per passenger
- RTP Goals: 3, 6

4.2.7. Performance Measure 7 – Land Use

This measure monitors the efficiency of land use and is reported over time since 2000. There is a need in Sierra County to balance land preservation with land use patterns that discourage sprawl and leap-frog development. Accessing this data requires minimal resource requirements and should be reviewed every 2 years for a high level of accuracy. This kind of data is not used for benefit/cost analysis.

Desired outcome and RTP/State goals:

- Land use efficiency
- Coordinate with Caltrans on State Highway projects to maintain them at acceptable levels and reduce lane miles needing rehabilitation
- Recommended RTP projects to maintain roads at or above the minimum acceptable condition as set by the county
- RTP Goal: 6

5 FINANCIAL ELEMENT

The financial element identifies current and expected revenue resources available to implement the short-range (2025-2035) and long-range (2036-2045) projects defined in the Action Element of the RTP. The funding in the short-range project list is financially constrained and is either programmed or is reasonably assumed to be available in the year identified. Long-range projections are subject to change and should be updated with each subsequent RTP cycle. Each funding resource identified in the financial element is aligned with eligible projects for that specific resource. The intent of the Financial Element is to define realistic funding constraints and opportunities

5.1. FEDERAL SOURCES

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) –

- Over the years, the federal government has provided guaranteed funding for surface transportation improvements through legislation. The IIJA is the most recent version and replaces the Fixing Americas Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) and was signed into law on November 15th, 2021. The IIJA funding includes approximately \$350 billion over a five-year period (2022-2026) for Federal highway programs, up to \$108 billion, including a guaranteed \$91 billion in funding for public transportation programs, additionally the IIJA includes many competitive grant programs funding a variety of projects. The following programs are potential funding sources for Sierra County transportation improvement projects:

National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) – This core program will focus on repairing and improving the National Highway System. The Highway Bridge Program (HBP), which provides funding for highway bridges in need of repair according to federal safety standards, falls under this core program. State and local bridge replacement projects are funded through Caltrans with HBP grants. The goal of the program is to rehabilitate or replace public highway bridges when it has been determined that the bridge is significantly important and unsafe. The federal share of a HBP project is 80 percent. To be eligible for rehabilitation a bridge must be rated Structurally Deficient with a sufficiency rate of less than 80. To be eligible for replacement, the sufficiency rating must be 50 or less. Bridges classified solely as 'Functionally Obsolete' are no longer eligible for federal Highway Bridge Program (HBP) funding,

with eligibility now limited to bridges rated as 'Structurally Deficient.' According to recent Caltrans data, approximately eight bridges in Sierra County are currently considered in poor condition.

- **Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP)** - The Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) provides flexible funding to states and localities for projects aimed at preserving and improving conditions and performance on Federal-aid highways, bridges, and tunnels on any public road, as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and transit capital projects. The program also supports infrastructure improvements that enhance safety, mobility, and accessibility. STBGP funds include dedicated set-asides for pedestrian and bicycle projects, and a portion of funding is specifically reserved for local jurisdictions. The federal share of funding under STBGP typically covers up to 80 percent of eligible project costs. Approximately \$13.8 billion in flexible funding is available annually nationwide under this program.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)** – The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is a core federal-aid program, authorized under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Nationally, IIJA provides \$15.6 billion for HSIP between Fiscal Years (FY) 2022 and 2026, which represents a significant increase from previous funding levels. California's share of this funding is estimated at approximately \$1.37 billion total over the same five-year period, or roughly \$270+ million per year statewide for HSIP-eligible safety projects.
The primary goal of HSIP is to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads, including roadways, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and railway-highway crossings. In California, Local HSIP focuses on roadway infrastructure projects that address documented safety issues. Eligible projects often draw on nationally recognized crash reduction factors (CRFs), supported by crash data and analysis of crash experience, crash potential, and crash rates. Additionally, the High-Risk Rural Roads (HRRR) component of HSIP targets rural roads with fatal or serious-injury collision rates that exceed the statewide average, or that otherwise exhibit significant safety risks. Fatality rates on rural roads must be tracked to determine eligibility for HRRR funding.
- **Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP)** – The Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) provides funding to improve transportation facilities owned or maintained by federal land management agencies such as the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and others. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), the total nationwide funding for FLTP has increased. Currently, about \$1.73 billion is authorized over five years (FY 2022–2026), or roughly

\$346 million annually, to maintain and enhance access within national forests, national recreation areas, park units, wildlife refuges, and other federal lands.

The bulk of the FLTP appropriation is sub-allocated directly to the major land management agencies based on formulas and annual appropriations. Historically, NPS has received the largest portion of FLTP funding. The approximate distribution under IJJA includes:

- **National Park Service (NPS):** \$1.3 billion total over five years (about \$260 million annually)
- **U.S. Forest Service (USFS):** \$110 million total over five years (about \$22 million annually)
- **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS):** \$135 million total over five years (about \$27 million annually)
- **Competitive/Other Agencies:** The remaining portion is allocated competitively among other eligible federal land management agencies using a performance-based approach.

FLTP funds support projects that improve safety, preserve existing transportation assets, reduce environmental impacts, and enhance access to federal lands. Eligible work may include roadway reconstruction, engineering, bridge repairs, safety improvements, transit infrastructure, and related enhancements aimed at ensuring efficient and safe public access to national forests, parks, and other federal properties. The program's overall goal is to maintain a high-quality transportation network that supports recreation, resource protection, economic growth (through tourism), and rural community connectivity.

- **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)** – The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) provides funding to improve transportation facilities (including roads, bridges, and transit systems) that are located on, are adjacent to, or provide direct access to federal lands. FLAP replaced and expanded the former Forest Highways program by addressing access needs for all federal lands nationwide.

Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), FLAP has been authorized at approximately \$1.49 billion total over the five-year period from FY 2022 through FY 2026, or about \$298 million per year. Funds are distributed to each state based on a statutory formula that considers factors such as:

- Recreational visitation to federal lands
- Federal land area within the state
- Public road mileage
- Number of public bridges
- Population and other metrics

Each state must provide a non-federal match, which varies but is often around 11.47% unless otherwise stated by specific program guidance. Funded projects typically address the resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, and construction of roads and transit facilities providing critical access to federal lands. Eligible applicants—such as state, county, tribal, or local governments—work cooperatively with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to identify and implement improvements that bolster connectivity, safety, economic development, and recreational access around public lands.

- **Tribal Transportation Program** - The Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) provides funding for planning, design, construction, and maintenance of public roads and transit facilities that serve Tribal communities. This program continues the focus of the former Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) program while adding dedicated set-asides for Tribal bridge projects, Tribal safety initiatives, and management/oversight functions.

Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), total funding for TTP has increased significantly compared to previous authorizations. Nationally, the Tribal Transportation Program receives approximately \$1.1 billion per year under IIJA for FY 2022–2026—nearly double the pre-IIJA level. The TTP includes:

- **Formula Funding:** Distributed to Tribes based on factors such as population, road mileage, and relative need.
- **Tribal Bridge Set-Asides:** For rehabilitating or replacing structurally deficient or functionally obsolete Tribal bridges.
- **Tribal Safety Funding:** Targeted specifically at reducing fatalities and serious injuries on Tribal roads.
- **Program Management/Oversight:** Supporting administrative tasks, technical assistance, and capacity building.

Eligible projects often focus on improving access to essential services—such as housing, healthcare, education, and commerce—while also enhancing safety and mobility. Typical uses of TTP funds include pavement rehabilitation, bridge upgrades, roadway widening, transit operations, pedestrian/bike facilities, and related activities. Tribes must coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to program and obligate TTP funds, ensuring that projects are consistent with federal requirements and Tribal priorities.

- **Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects** – A discretionary grant for large federal land or tribal and projects.

5.2. STATE SOURCES

The following section lists the transportation funding sources available through the State of California:

State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) – This program consists of two broad transportation improvement programs: the regional program funded by 75% of the STIP funding, and the interregional program funded by 25% of the STIP funding. Brief summaries of these funds are provided below along with other state funding sources:

- **Regional Improvement Program (RIP)** – RIP funds account for 75% of STIP funding. The 75% portion is subdivided by formula into county shares. The SCTC programs funds which are apportioned to the region. These funds may be used to finance projects that are both “on” and “off” the state highway system. This “regional share” must be relied n to fund capacity increasing projects on much of the state highway system. Critical to rural California counties, regional STIP funding may be used for local rehabilitation projects.
- **Interregional Improvement Program (IIP)** – The IIP receives the remaining 25% of the STIP funding. The IIP funds taken collectively form the Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP). This program is controlled and programmed by Caltrans, although regional agencies provide input on the specific ITIP projects for their region. One of the goals of the program is to encourage regional agencies and the state to establish partnerships to conduct certain projects. For the rural California counties, a challenge to use IIP funding is the very limited availability of a “local match” for IIP-funded programs. (However, RIP funds can be used as a match for the ITIP program). In actuality, Caltrans receives 15% for state highway projects on the interregional system; potential projects must compete statewide for the remaining funds. Much of the state highway system is not eligible for interregional funding and must rely on the regional share to fund capacity improvement projects.
- **Planning Programming and Monitoring Funds** – Programming of these funds comes from county shares and can be programmed for each year of the STIP. The CTC STIP guidelines define eligible PPM activities as regional transportation planning (including the development and preparation of the regional transportation plan), project planning (including the development of project study reports or major investment studies, conducted by regional agencies or by local agencies in corporation with regional agencies), program development (including the preparation of RTIPs and studies supporting them), and

monitoring the implementation of STIP projects (including project delivery, timely use of funds, and compliance with State law and CTC guidelines).

Caltrans estimates the amount of funding available for the STIP program for a five-year period every two years. The most recent STIP Fund Estimate was developed in 2024. Based on that fund estimate and the STIP guidelines, the SCTC develops a program of projects for the five-year period. The SCTC submits this program of projects called the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) to the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The RTIP specifies cost per project component and fiscal year over a five-year period. When the CTC approves the RTIP, it becomes part of the STIP.

State Highway Operations and Protection Program (SHOPP) – The purpose of the SHOPP is to maintain the integrity of the state highway system. Funding for this program is provided through gas tax revenues. Projects are nominated within each Caltrans District office. Proposed projects are sent to Caltrans Headquarters for programming on a competitive basis statewide. Final project funding determinations are subject to the CTC review. Individual districts are not guaranteed a minimum level of funding. SHOPP projects are based on statewide priorities within each program category (i.e safety, rehabilitation, operations, etc.) within each Caltrans district. SHOPP funds cannot be used for capacity-enhancing projects.

- **SHOPP Minor Programs** – Within the State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP), Caltrans also administers Minor A and Minor B programs to fund relatively small-scale capital improvement projects on the State Highway System. These programs operate on an annual budget allocated to each Caltrans district, which provides some local discretion in choosing projects, subject to statewide program priorities. The streamlined process and smaller project scope often allow quicker delivery compared to larger SHOPP projects.

Minor A

- **Funding Cap:** Up to \$1.5 million per project (recently increased from \$1.25 million to accommodate rising construction costs and inflation).
- **Scope of Projects:** Safety improvements, pavement rehabilitation, bridge maintenance, drainage projects, and other minor capital outlays on the State Highway System.

- **Selection Process:** District offices identify and propose projects based on need and statewide priorities, with final approval at Caltrans Headquarters.

Minor B

- **Funding Cap:** Up to \$416,000 per project (increased from \$291,000 to adjust for inflation).
- **Scope of Projects:** Very small-scale highway system repairs, maintenance, and operational enhancements, such as sign replacements, guardrail repairs, or small drainage fixes.
- **Selection Process:** Like Minor A, each district office has limited annual funding and discretion to fund priority projects.

Both Minor A and Minor B programs aim to expedite urgent repairs or smaller-scale enhancements that maintain the safety and functionality of the highway network without the lengthy project development and approval processes often required for larger, more complex projects. Funding remains locally competitive within each Caltrans district and is allocated on an annual basis, so the availability of funding and the number of approved projects can vary from year to year.

California Senate Bill 1 – Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), also known as the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, provides a significant and ongoing increase in California’s transportation funding. It is projected to generate an average of \$5.2 to \$5.4 billion annually for transportation through various tax and fee increases. Key provisions include:

Fuel Tax Increases

- **Gasoline Excise Tax:** Increased by \$0.12 per gallon (effective November 1, 2017), with subsequent annual inflation-based adjustments starting July 1, 2020.
- **Diesel Excise Tax:** Increased by \$0.20 per gallon, also subject to annual inflation adjustments.
- **Diesel Sales Tax:** Increased by an additional 4 percentage points.

New Vehicle Fees

- **Transportation Improvement Fee (TIF):** A vehicle registration surcharge ranging from \$25 to \$175 annually based on vehicle value, indexed to inflation.
- **Road Improvement Fee for Zero-Emission Vehicles:** Starting in 2020, owners of zero-emission vehicles (model year 2020 or later) pay an annual fee in lieu of the gasoline excise tax that would otherwise fund transportation.

Funding Distribution and Programs

SB 1 revenues are allocated to multiple transportation programs, boosting investment in both state and local infrastructure:

- **State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP):** Receives additional funding to restore prior shortfalls.
- **State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP):** Receives substantial ongoing revenues for highway maintenance, rehabilitation, and safety improvements.
- **Local Streets and Roads:** Provides billions to cities and counties for pavement preservation, safety, and other critical improvements, allocated through the Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Account.
- **State Transit Assistance (STA):** Increases operating and capital funds for local transit agencies via diesel sales tax revenue.
- **Active Transportation Program (ATP):** Allocates an additional \$100 million per year statewide for pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized projects.
- **Bridge and Culvert Maintenance:** Supplements resources for critical bridge and culvert upgrades.
- **Other Programs:** Includes funds for the Local Partnership Program, Solutions for Congested Corridors, Trade Corridor Enhancement, and various competitive grants.

Overall, SB 1 represents a transformative investment in California's transportation system, helping address deferred maintenance needs, expand public transit, improve safety, reduce congestion, and foster active modes of travel. All SB 1 rates and fees adjust annually with inflation, ensuring a more stable and predictable funding stream for ongoing transportation projects.

Regional Surface Transportation Program (RSTP) Rural counties can currently exchange federal Surface Transportation dollars for State Highway Account (SHA) funds (a process known as "RSTP Exchange"). This is advantageous to RTPAs as federal funds have more stringent requirements such as a 20% local match, while state funds do not require any local match. The state also provides additional state funds to the county, as a match to the exchanged federal dollars. Eligible RSTP projects include:

- Construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, resurfacing, restoration and operational improvements on Federal Aid Highways (any highways which are not classified as local or rural minor collectors) and bridges (on public roads of all functional classifications)
 - Environmental mitigation for an RTSP project
 - Capital transit projects
 - Carpool projects
 - Highway and transit safety projects
 - Capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring
 - Surface transportation planning programs
 - Transportation enhancement activities
 - Transportation control measures
 - Highway and transit R&D and technology transfer programs.

Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM) Program – The Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM) Program provides state-level funding to mitigate environmental impacts of new or modified transportation facilities. The EEM focuses on projects such as highway landscaping, urban forestry, roadside recreational facilities (e.g., rest stops, trails, scenic overlooks, parks, and snow parks), or other efforts that go beyond standard environmental mitigation measures.

The program has approximately \$7 million made available each year (subject to legislative appropriation) from the Highway Users Tax Account. The funds are administered by the California Natural Resources Agency, which announces grant cycles and selects projects through a competitive application process. EEM-funded projects must demonstrate a direct or indirect relationship to the environmental impacts of a specific transportation facility, while providing enhancement or additional mitigation benefits to affected natural or community resources.

The Active Transportation Program (ATP) – Created by Senate Bill 99 (Chapter 359) and Assembly Bill 101 (Chapter 354) on September 26, 2013, the Active Transportation Program (ATP) consolidates several federal and state transportation programs into a single grant program focused on non-motorized transportation. It combined the

Transportation Alternatives Program, Bicycle Transportation Account (BTA), and State Safe Routes to School (SR2S) with the goal of making California a national leader in active transportation.

Key Funding and Requirements:

- Since its inception, the ATP has grown substantially, especially after Senate Bill 1 (SB 1) dedicated an additional \$100 million annually. In recent cycles, total ATP funding has averaged more than \$220 million per year statewide.
- Under state law, at least 25% of ATP funding must benefit disadvantaged communities.
- Most projects require an 11.47% local match, although projects primarily benefiting a disadvantaged community may receive a match waiver.

Program Goals:

- Increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking
- Increase safety and mobility for non-motorized users
- Advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals
- Enhance public health, including reducing childhood obesity, by funding projects such as Safe Routes to School
- Ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program
- Provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users

The ATP remains highly competitive, as it is the primary funding source for bicycle and pedestrian projects in the state. Eligible applicants include local governments, regional transportation planning agencies, transit agencies, school districts, tribal governments, and nonprofits (with a public agency sponsor). Program funds can be used for infrastructure (bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian facilities), planning, non-infrastructure (education and outreach), and transformative projects that promote a mode shift toward active transportation.

Rural Planning Assistance (RPA) – This recurring state grant program provides funds to rural RTPAs – on a reimbursement basis – specifically for purposes of transportation planning. Activities and products developed using these funds are governed by an annual Overall Work Program, prepared by the region and approved by Caltrans.

Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program – This grant program was created to support Caltrans' current mission to provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's

economy and livability. Overarching objectives of this grant program are to ensure consideration of these major efforts in transportation planning, including sustainability, preservation, mobility, safety, innovation, economy, health, and equity. There are two separate grant programs: Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Communities which effectively replace former Environmental Justice, Community-Based Transportation Planning, and Transit Planning grant programs.

Strategic Partnerships Program – Strategic Partnerships grants are funded primarily through Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) State Planning and Research (Partnership Planning) resources. They support transportation planning studies of interregional and statewide significance in collaboration with Caltrans, aiming to improve transportation system performance, multimodal integration, freight mobility, and other broad priorities.

Grant awards typically range from \$100,000 to \$500,000, requiring a 20% local match (cash or in-kind). RTPAs and MPOs serve as primary applicants, while transit agencies, local governments, tribal governments, universities, and non-profits may participate as sub-applicants. Eligible projects often include corridor studies, goods-movement planning, multimodal data collection, and other strategic efforts that benefit a large geographic area. Grants are awarded competitively through an annual process administered by Caltrans, with an emphasis on robust stakeholder collaboration and alignment with federal planning requirements.

Sustainable Communities Grant Funding – Sustainable Communities grants are funded through Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5304 and the State Highway Account (SHA) to address multimodal transportation planning that advances Caltrans' mission and overarching objectives of sustainability, preservation, mobility, safety, innovation, economy, health, and equity. Grant awards typically range from \$50,000 to \$500,000, requiring a local match of 11.47%. Primary eligible applicants include Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs), Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), transit agencies, local governments, and tribal governments. Non-profit organizations and other public entities may participate as sub-applicants.

Proposed studies must help create more sustainable, accessible, and resilient transportation networks. Typical projects may involve strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote climate adaptation, support safe routes to school, explore complete streets, and evaluate land use integration or affordable housing proximity. Funds

can also be applied toward public health analyses, active transportation plans, corridor enhancements, transit planning or marketing, and research on social equity in transportation. Studies that address community-specific issues like environmental justice or health disparities are also prioritized. The program allows student internships (for rural agencies) and encourages broad stakeholder engagement to ensure resulting plans align with statewide objectives while reflecting local and regional needs.

Fuel Excise Tax Revenues, Highway Users Tax Account – Roughly 36% of the state base excise tax and 44% of the price-based fuel excise tax, gas tax swap, (after revenue used to backfill weight fees which have been diverted) are allocated to cities and counties for road projects. Allocation formulas are complex and based on population, proportion of registered vehicles, and maintained county road miles. These funds can be used for maintenance, new construction, engineering, administration, right of way and other uses.

Vehicle License Fees – Revenue from motor vehicle license fees is allocated back to local jurisdictions for any purpose.

5.3. LOCAL SOURCES

There are no local dedicated sources available for ongoing transportation costs other those “passed through” from state or federal programs. The following sources of funding for transportation projects are available to local governments through various means:

- **Traffic Mitigation Fees** – Traffic mitigation fees are one-time charges on new developments to pay for required public facilities and to mitigate impacts created by or reasonably related to development. There are several approaches to charging developers for the provision of public facilities. In all cases, however, the fees must be clearly related to the costs incurred as a result of the development. Passed to govern the imposition of development fees, AB 1600 requires that a rational connection be made between a fee and the type of development on which the fee is based. Furthermore, fees cannot be used to correct existing problems or pay for improvements needed for existing development. A county may only levy such fees in the unincorporated area over which it has jurisdiction, while a city must levy fees within the city limits. Any fee program to pay for regional facilities must have the cooperation of all jurisdictions in which future

growth is expected to take place. Traffic mitigation fees would be difficult to implement in Sierra County, due to the dispersion of development over a wide area, which makes it difficult to allocate specific improvements to a range of developments, and the desire to avoid discouraging development through the imposition of additional fees. In any case, extremely low levels of new development in Sierra County would generate minimal fee revenues.

- **Development Mitigation Measures/Agreements** – Development mitigation measures are imposed whenever development requires approval by a local entity. Generally, mitigation measures are imposed as condition on tentative maps. These conditions reflect on – and off-site project mitigation that must be completed to be able to develop. Development agreements are also used to gain cooperation of developers in constructing off-site infrastructure improvements, or dedicating rights-of-way needed as a result of the proposed development. As with impact fees, developer mitigations are generally available to fund on-going transportation maintenance and operations costs. Further, this funding source is improbable and insignificant for Sierra County.

5.4. TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

A wide range of potential transit funding sources are available, particularly within California. The following discussion provides an overview of these programs.

5.4.1. Federal Funding Sources

The following are discussions of federal transit funding programs available to rural areas:

- **FTA Capital Program Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities Grant** – Capital projects to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment, and to construct bus-related facilities. A sub-program provides competitive grants for bus and bus facility projects that support low and zero-emission vehicles.
- **FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities** – This program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities by providing funds for programs to serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. This program consolidates

the old New Freedom program with the Elderly and Disabled Program. Grants are available for both capital (20% local match) and operating purposes (50% local match) to areas with less than 200,000 in population. Projects to be funded with FTA 5310 funds must be derived from a Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan.

- **FTA Section 5311 Public Transportation for Rural Areas** – FTA Section 5311 provides federal transit funding for non-urbanized (rural) areas with populations under 50,000. In California, the local match requirements generally remain **11.47%** for capital and **44.67%** for operating expenses. Caltrans administers these funds on behalf of FTA, splitting them into two categories:

Apportioned Program: Most of the funding is allocated directly to rural counties based on each county's share of the rural population.

Discretionary Program: A smaller portion is awarded on a competitive basis, often supporting capital needs such as vehicle purchases or facility upgrades.

Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the national appropriation for Section 5311 has increased, and California's share has followed suit. In recent years (e.g., FY 2022), the state's annual formula apportionment has been around \$40 million, with additional discretionary funds available through separate grant solicitations. This funding helps rural transit operators maintain and expand critical services, including fixed-route and demand-responsive transit, to improve mobility for residents in low-density areas.

- **Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP)** – The RTAP (49 USC. 5311) provides a source of funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance projects and other support services tailored to meet the needs of transit operators in non-urbanized areas. RTAP has both state and national program components. The state program provides an annual allocation to each state to develop and implement training and technical assistance programs in conjunction with the state's administration of the Section 5311 formula assistance program. The national program provides for the development of information and materials for use by local operators and state administering agencies and supports research and technical assistance projects of national interests. There is no federal requirement for a local match.

5.4.2. State Funding Sources

A mainstay of funding for transit programs in California is provided by the Transportation Development Act (TDA). The TDA provides two major sources of funding for public transportation: the local Transportation Fund (LTF), which began in 1972, and the State Transit Assistance (STA) fund, Established in 1980.

- **Local Transportation Fund** – The majority of TDA funds are provided through the LTF. These funds are generated by a one-fourth cent statewide sales tax and returned to the county of origin. Consequently, LTF funds are based on local population and spending. the LTF may be allocated by SCTC for the following prioritized purposes:
 - A reasonable amount is needed by SCTC for TDA administration. This amount varies between RTPAs
 - Up to 3% of annual LTF revenues may be allocated to the RTPA for the conduct of the transportation planning and programming process
 - 2% of the remaining amount may be provided for pedestrian and/or bicycle facilities
 - Up to 5% of the remaining funds may be allocated for coordinated community transit services
 - The remaining fund must be spent for transit and paratransit purposes, unless the Transportation Commission finds that either no unmet transit needs, or that unmet needs cannot be reasonably met
 - If there are no reasonable-to-meet unmet transit needs, remaining funds may be allocated to local streets and roads to jurisdictions based on population
- **State Transit Assistance** – In addition to LTF funding, the TDA includes a STA funding mechanism. The sales tax on diesel fuel is used to fund public transit operations and capital improvements. This amount was recently augmented by the diesel fuel sales tax increase from SB 1.
- **The Low Carbon Transit Operations Program** – This is one of several programs that are part of the Transit, Affordable Housing, and Sustainable Communities Program established by the California Legislature in 2014 by Senate Bill 862. The LCTOP was created to provide operating and capital assistance for transit agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emission and improve mobility, with priority on serving disadvantaged communities. Eligible projects include new or expanded bus or rail services, expanded intermodal transit facilities, and may include equipment acquisition, fueling, maintenance and other costs to operate those services or facilities, as long as each project reduces greenhouses gas emissions. For agencies whose service area includes disadvantaged communities, at least 50% of the total money received shall be expended on projects that will benefit

disadvantaged communities. This relatively new program is administered by Caltrans in coordination with Air Resource Board (ARB) and the State Controller's Office (SCO).

- **Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)** – Also created by SB 862, this program provides funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, for rail or intercity rail feeder bus projects which reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Eligible applicants must be public agencies, including joint powers agencies, that operate or have planning responsibility for existing or planned regularly scheduled intercity or commuter passenger rail service (and associated feeder bus service to intercity rail services), urban rail transit service, or bus or ferry transit service (including commuter bus services and vanpool services).

5.4.3. Aviation

- **Federal Airport Improvement Program (AIP)** – The AIP provides 90% of federal funding (requiring a 10% local and state match) for public use airports that are part of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS). Available for most capital expenditures, this funding program must be approved annually by Congress. In recent years it has experienced major funding reductions. AIP funds are derived from user charges such as aviation fuel tax, civil aircraft tax, and air passenger fare surcharges. The Sierraville-Dearwater Airport is not currently listed on the NPIAS system and therefore not eligible for AIP funds.
- **State of California Airport Grants** – The California Division of Aeronautics makes grant funds available for airport development and operations. Three types of state financial aid to publicly owned airports are available.
 - **Annual Grants** – For up to \$10,000 per airport per year. These funds can be used for a variety of purposes from runway reconstruction, obstruction removal to radios.
 - **Acquisition and Development (A&D)** – Grants provide funds for the cost of qualified airport developments on a matching basis, to the extent that state funds are available. Grant amounts can range from a minimum of \$20,000 to a maximum of \$500,000. The local match requirement is set annually by the CTC and can vary from 10 to 50% of total project costs. A&D grants cannot be used as a local match for FAA grants. A&D projects must be listed in the CIP and A&D grants are available to both NPIAS and non NPIAS airports. The amount available for A&D grants is what is left in the Aeronautics Account after funding State Operations, Annual Grants and AIP matching.

- **Local Airport Loan Program** – This program provides discretionary low interest State loans to eligible airports for projects that enhance an airport’s ability to provide general aviation services (hangars, terminals, utilities, fueling facilities, A&D-eligible projects, etc.). A loan may also provide the local share for an AIP grant. Such a loan can be used in conjunction with a State-funded AIP Matching grant. The maximum term of a loan is 17 years.

Funding for airport improvements is limited. At the state level excise taxes on AVGAS and General Aviation jet fuel are the only source of revenue for the Division of Aeronautics. Funding currently available represents a 25% decrease from historic levels. There is no revenue from aircraft fees in Sierra County to fund all maintenance needs and necessary improvements for substandard airport facilities, which makes state and federal grants and loans difficult to obtain.

5.5. PROJECTED REVENUES

Projecting revenues and expenditure over a 20-year horizon is challenging, as funding levels can fluctuate significantly or be altered by new legislation and policy changes. Discretionary funds are especially difficult to forecast, since they are allocated on a competitive basis and can change from one cycle to the next. Despite these uncertainties, regions must make the best possible estimates to demonstrate reasonable financial assumptions in their long-range plans.

The 2022 STIP Fund Estimate identified approximately \$2.1 billion in new programming capacity statewide over the five-year period (FY 2022–2027). This capacity refers to the amount the California Transportation Commission (CTC) can program for projects each year within the STIP, rather than actual cash on hand. It represents an improvement over the 2016 STIP Fund Estimate, which showed negative programming capacity, and is roughly in line with the 2018 Fund Estimate of \$2.2 billion. The improved outlook is largely attributable to additional revenue provided by Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), which indexes fuel taxes to inflation and restores certain gas tax revenues to the STIP.

The most recent SHOPP (State Highway Operation and Protection Program) estimates also reflect significant investment increases. As of the 2022 STIP Fund Estimate, the SHOPP is programmed at about \$21.8 billion statewide over five years

(FY 2022–2027), largely funded by dedicated fuel tax revenues (including those from SB 1). This marks a substantial increase compared to earlier cycles, when funding was more constrained and subject to revenue volatility.

For longer-range planning (beyond the initial four or five years), this RTP assumes that STIP and SHOPP funding will see modest annual growth, roughly 1% per year, to account for both inflation indexing (under SB 1) and ongoing improvements in vehicle fuel efficiency, which could dampen per-gallon revenues over time. At the federal level, this RTP assumes that the IIJA (or successor authorizations) will continue funding apportionments at similar or slightly increasing levels, recognizing that reauthorization bills can change specific programs or introduce new discretionary grants.

Table 5.1 presents the expected revenue sources and funding levels for the next 20 years, organized by short-range and long-range time frames. The projections account for anticipated inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and include assumptions about future state and federal legislation. Nonetheless, long-range estimates remain subject to change due to evolving economic conditions, legislative priorities, and policy adjustments at the state and federal levels.

5.6. COST SUMMARY

The table below summarizes projected costs and expected revenues for the next 20 years, split into Short-Range (0–5 years) and Long-Range (6–20 years) horizons for each transportation mode. All values are approximate, based on the Sierra County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) project lists and financial projections. Funding gaps (negative values) indicate where projected costs exceed identified revenues, highlighting unmet funding needs.

Table 5.2: Revenue vs. Cost by Mode

(Short-Range: 0–5 years; Long-Range: 6–20 years)

Mode	Short-Range Cost	Short-Range Revenue	Long-Range Cost	Long-Range Revenue
Roadways	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$67,100,000	\$28,300,000
Bridges	\$30,000,000	\$30,000,000	\$12,800,000	TBD
Public Transit	\$303,000	\$303,000	\$850,000	TBD
Bicycle/Pedestrian	\$7,700,000	\$7,700,000	\$17,900,000	TBD
Aviation	\$400,000	\$400,000	\$1,700,000	TBD
Freight Movement	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$1,000,000	TBD
Total	\$68,603,000	\$68,603,000	\$116,350,000	\$28,300,000

5.7. DATA SOURCES AND REFERENCES

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21. **California Transportation Commission**, *2025 Active Transportation Program Staff Recommendations*.
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Sierra County Transportation Commission
Meeting: March 19, 2025
Agenda Item 14 – Other Transportation Issues

- A. Informational speed zone justification report from the Department of Transportation District 3 pertaining to Sierraville speed zones.

No action required.

- B. Update on the speed zone justification report from the Department of Transportation, District 3 pertaining to Sierra City speed Zones.

No action required.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**DISTRICT 3**

703 B STREET

MARYSVILLE, CA 95901

PHONE (530) 741-4233

FAX (530) 741-4245

TTY 711

www.dot.ca.gov/dist3

*Making Conservation
a California Way of Life.*

February 5, 2025

Sie-49-47.45/47.86

Sierraville

**Sierra County Board of Supervisors
100 Courthouse Square, Room 11
P.O. Drawer D
Downieville, CA 95936**

The Department of Transportation (Caltrans) recently conducted an Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS) on State Route 49, in and around Sierraville from the 49/89 intersection to Lemon Canyon Road. Periodic E&TSs are necessary to ensure zones remain enforceable.

As required by Section 22354.5(b) of the California Vehicle Code, this letter provides you notice that your staff may choose to conduct a public meeting on the results of the draft E&TS and forward Caltrans any comments you may receive. We will then take any input you provide into consideration prior to finalizing any speed zones.

Enclosed is a draft copy of justification sheets and strip maps for your review. Please submit a response to this letter to us by **April 29, 2025**. If we have not heard from you by this date, we will conclude there are no objections or comments, and we will proceed with finalizing the changes to the existing speed zones accordingly.

If you have any questions or would like to meet in-person to discuss the details of the E&TS, prior to deciding on the direction to take with a public meeting, we would be happy to reserve time at the Caltrans District Office (703 B Street Marysville, CA 95901) to meet with your agency. Please contact D'Arcy McLeod at (530) 741-5733 to schedule a time at your convenience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Bokova'.

Mary Bokova, P.E.
Chief, Traffic Safety Branch

Cc: Bryan Davey, Director of Public Works, Sierra County

With regards to the Engineering & Traffic Survey performed on **03/Sie/49**, in and around Sierraville or their delegate, submits the following response:

_____ A public hearing is not necessary.

_____ The Sierra County Board of Supervisors would like to conduct a public hearing for the segment referenced above. If a Public Hearing is held, please forward us a copy of the comments and any official recommendations or concerns no later than 60 days from this notice.

Name & Title of Responding Official

Signature of Responding Official

Date

Return response to:

California Department of Transportation
District 3 – Department of Safety
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901
Attention: D’Arcy McLeod

Or you may submit a scanned signed response via email: darcy.mcleod@dot.ca.gov

Memorandum

To: MARY BOKOVA, CHIEF
Traffic Safety Branch

Date: December 4, 2024

File: 03/Sie/49
PM 47.45 to PM 47.86
Proposed 40 MPH Zone

From: JASON HUANG, PE
Traffic Operations Engineer

Signature:

Subject: SPEED ZONE JUSTIFICATION

This 0.41-mile long 35-mph speed zone traverses mostly residential area in Sierraville. The highway is a two-lane conventional in valley terrain.

85th Percentile Speeds Northbound: 35-45 mph (range)
Southbound: 35-41 mph (range)

District Collision Records There were 2 accidents (0 fatalities) in the three-year period from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023. The actual collision rate is 8.33 ACC/MVM (accidents per million vehicle miles) and the statewide average rate is 1.63 ACC/MVM.

Conditions Not Readily Apparent to the Driver None

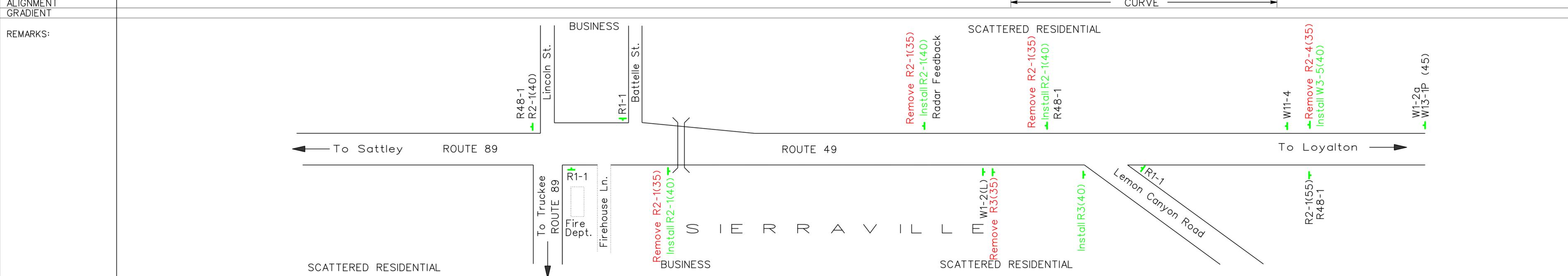
Summary State collision records show that the average actual accident rate is 5.11 times the average accident rate and above the statewide average rate.

According to State accident records, the primary collision factors were improper turn and failure to yield.

The 85th percentile speeds were 0 to 10 mph higher than the existing posted speed limit. Observed 50th percentile speeds were 5 mph lower to 4 mph higher than the existing speed limit.

The 85th percentile for the section of SR 89 directly connected to this speed zone is also 36-43 mph. Keeping this stretch of road consistent will reduce collisions.

Based on this information and our engineering judgement, a 40 mph speed limit will be proposed.



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DIVISION OF HIGHWAYS
TRAFFIC BRANCH

SPEED ZONE SURVEY

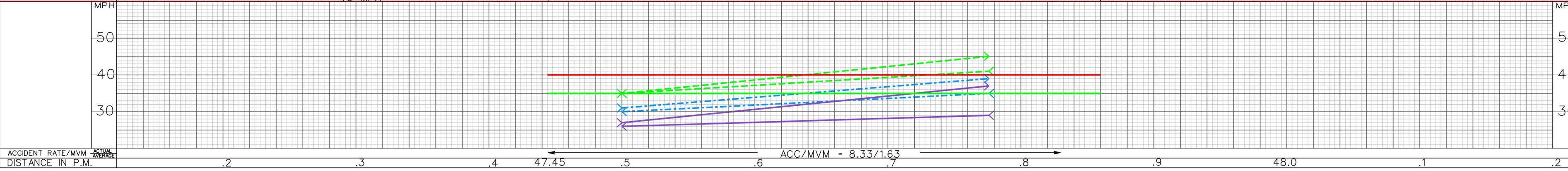
DIST. 03C0_SIE RTE.49 SEC.
CITY OR TOWN SIERRAVILLE
STREET OR ROAD
FROM 47.45 TO 47.86
SCALE: _____
DATE EXPIRES: _____

The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the original instrument.

Dated: _____

DRAFT

ROADWAY WIDTH	Var.		24'	
NO. OF STRIPED LANES	2			
TYPE OF DIVISION STRIP	Painted Stripe			
TRAFFIC SIGNAL DATA	None			
AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC	500			
OBSERVED 85th PERCENTILE	35	35	45	41
OBSERVED 50th PERCENTILE	31	30	39	35
OBSERVED SPEED-PAVE	27-36	26-35	37-46	29-38
EXISTING SIGNED ZONE	35 MPH		35 MPH	
PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT	40 MPH		40 MPH	



Legend

ROAD SIGNS (CODE NO) ↓

REGULATORY & WARNING

TRAFFIC SIGNALS

OBSERVED 85TH SPEED →

50th PERCENTILE SPEED →

LOWER LIMIT OF PACE ←

ARROWS INDICATE TRAFFIC DIRECTION

SPEED ZONES

GREEN-EXISTING ZONES

RED-PROPOSED ZONES

INDICATE

HOSPITALS, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, AUDITORIUMS, PUBLIC PARKS, SCHOOLS