LASSEN COUNTY GENERAL PLAN
- 2000 -

CIRCULATION ELEMENT

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SECTION ONE:
INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

Lassen County adopted its first General Plan in 1968. That General Plan contained five basic elements: Land Use; Circulation; Recreation and Tourism; Housing; and Natural Resources Conservation. Other Elements have been adopted or revised since 1968, and a number of "area plans" which included consideration of area-specific circulation issues have been adopted as part of the General Plan, but the basic components of the 1968 General Plan, including the Circulation Element, have served the County since the time of their adoption.

Lassen County has also complied with State law since 1968 by organizing and participating with a Regional Transportation Planning Agency and completing a number of "transportation plans", including the periodically revised Regional Transportation Plan. These planning programs are described in more detail in Section Three.

As important and necessary as the goals, objectives and policies of these transportation plans are in addressing and planning to meet the circulation needs of Lassen County, including the identification of needed highway projects and public transportation programs, these plans have not been prepared or adopted as the "circulation element" which is required by state General Plan law. The purpose of this revised Circulation Element is to update Lassen County's general plan circulation policies in consideration of the County's related general plan elements, especially the Land Use Element, and in consideration of contemporary issues facing the County in terms of transportation and general circulation.

1.2 CIRCULATION ELEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Government Code Section 65302(b) states that the general plan shall include a circulation element consisting of the general location and extent of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities, all correlated with the land use element of the plan.

As described in the State's General Plan Guidelines, a circulation element is not simply a transportation plan. It should be an infrastructure plan that concerns itself with the circulation of people, goods, energy, water, sewage, storm drainage, and communications. Its provisions should support the goals, objectives, policies, and proposals of the land use element.

The provisions of a circulation element affect a community's physical, social and economic environment and welfare in several ways. The circulation system has a major physical influence on land use development patterns. Socially, circulation systems have a major impact on the areas and people they serve. Safe, efficient systems need to be accessible to all segments of the population, including the young, the poor, the elderly, and the handicapped.

Economically, the viability and vitality of a community's economy depends largely on efficient circulation of materials and products, and of consumers and employees.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT

Section One of the Circulation Element is comprised of this Introduction. Section Two consists of the Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures of the Circulation Element. Section Three of this element contains a general background discussion of Lassen County's transportation and circulation resources, programs, and special issues. This includes an overview of: existing transportation facilities and services, including public transportation; major pipeline and transmission lines; transportation funding and planning (e.g., the Regional Transportation Plan); and a discussion of special issues which may require consideration of distinct policies and implementation measures.

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SECTION TWO: GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

The following section contains the goals, policies and proposed implementation measures of the Lassen County General Plan Circulation Element.

1. HIGHWAYS AND ROADS

GOAL C-1: A comprehensive, efficient and safe transportation system to serve the needs of County residents and to stimulate the economic progress of the County.

CE-1 POLICY: Designated major circulation routes are indicated on the enclosed Lassen County Circulation Map. This map has been prepared after consideration of and in correlation with the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Local roads are not indicated in this element.

CE-2 POLICY: The County shall pursue receipt of funds from the California Transportation Commission and the local transportation planning agency to help maintain the County Road System.

CE-3 POLICY: Encourage city, state and Federal agencies (e.g., City of Susanville, Caltrans, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management) to consult with the County in the planning of major road projects, and to adequately maintain their road systems to serve recreationists and people and businesses who rely upon the use of resources on or near public lands in Lassen County. The County may consider the acceptance of Federal Forest Roads into the County-maintained road system when such roads are planned and developed in consultation with the County.

CE-4 POLICY: The County shall continue to support and work with the Lassen County Transportation Commission as the local transportation planning agency in the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan.

CE-5 POLICY: The Regional Transportation Plan and related proposals for and prioritization of capital improvements for roads, highways and other transportation

facilities need to be consistent with and supportive of the County's General Plan policies.

Implementation Measure:

CE-A The Regional Transportation Plan shall, whenever possible, include provisions to help implement related policies of the County's General Plan and should not include provisions which are inconsistent with or counter-productive to related policies of the General Plan. The County will encourage the consideration and interaction of land use and other General Plan policies, and capital facility plans, in the course of preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan.

CE-6 POLICY: The County shall continue to review and, when warranted, formulate improved standards for the necessary improvement and maintenance of roads serving new development, including standards for the incremental improvement or development of public roads.

CE-7 POLICY: In order to promote higher standards of access and road maintenance to residential areas, the County will encourage that access roads serving residential development be built to County standards and offered for acceptance into the County maintained system. Unless the County accepts the roads into its maintained system, new residential development projects shall be required to provide for the future maintenance of their roads through assessment districts or other practical and effective methods.

CE-8 POLICY: No new roads should be accepted into the County road system unless those roads have been constructed to a paved standard appropriate for the classification of the road being offered for dedication for public use.

CE-9 POLICY: The County should encourage and assist homeowner associations and other non-public entities to develop funding mechanisms (e.g., assessment districts, etc.) to insure that private roads within their organizational responsibility will be adequately maintained.

Implementation Measure:

CE-B Subdivision and planned unit development ordinances and project approvals will, when applicable, contain provisions to insure the success of proposed homeowner and other associations to adequately maintain private roads serving residential areas.

CE10 POLICY: In consideration of proposed projects which would generate a substantial

number of large trucks carrying heavy loads, the County shall require special mitigation measures to insure that those projects do not cause, or will adequately mitigate, significant deterioration of County roads.

Implementation Measure:

CE-C Pursuant to impacts evaluated in an environmental impact report or other form of project review, the County may require mitigation measures which will insure that project developers adequately and fairly compensate or participate with the County in the necessary upgrading and/or repair of the affected roads.

CE11 POLICY: The County shall request the allocation of funding for County roads which serve as connectors between State Highways and which are used substantially by through traffic (e.g., A2, Susanville Road; A3, Standish-Buntingville Road; A21, Mooney Road; County Road 513, Termo-Grasshopper Road; A25, North Herlong Access Road; and A26, South Herlong Access Road), especially when the state encourages the use of such County roads as connectors with signage and/or turn lanes.

CE12 POLICY: No public highway or roadway should be allowed to fall to or exist for a substantial amount of time at or below a Level of Service rating of "E" (i.e., road at or near capacity; reduced speeds; extremely difficult to maneuver; some stoppages).

CE13 POLICY: Because the safety and efficiency of traffic on State Route 36 and Main Street through the City of Susanville affects everyone who lives in, works in, and travels through that area of Lassen County, the County encourages continuing efforts by the Lassen County Transportation Commission, Caltrans and the City of Susanville to resolve safety problems and the poor and deteriorating level of service on this portion of the highway.

CE14 POLICY: The County shall continue to encourage and support the improvement of Highway 395 from Johnstonville to Hallelujah Junction as a four-lane expressway.

Implementation Measure:

CE-D The County shall work with Caltrans and the local transportation planning agency in the consideration of highway realignments and new public road interchange and frontage road locations and may propose mitigation measures to reduce the adverse impacts of such changes on established town centers and existing and planned land use patterns.

CE15 POLICY: Until Highway 395 can be upgraded to a four-lane expressway, the County supports the incremental addition of lanes, including increased numbers of passing lanes, and will work with Caltrans and the local transportation planning agency in the consideration and implementation of access management policies to protect traffic efficiency and safety and to facilitate future highway improvements. Such measures include the limitation of new encroachments onto Highway 395.

CE16 POLICY: The County should work with Caltrans to adopt practical and fair policies for access management and right-of-way acquisition for the improvement of highways, including U.S. Highway 395, and incorporate and further implement such policies with development standards within the County's subdivision ordinance and other development codes.

CE17 POLICY: The County should develop a long-range right-of-way acquisition program to facilitate obtaining needed road right-of-ways in conjunction with development permits in order to assist the County in its future road and street improvement program.

Implementation Measure:

CE-E The County shall consider the acquisition of needed right-of-way dedications with the approval of subdivisions, use permits and other discretionary actions.

CE18 POLICY: The County supports efforts by Caltrans to design and construct highway facilities such as deer under-crossings in deer travel corridors to reduce the number of deer/car collisions, especially on Highway 395.

2. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

GOAL C-2: Adequate, cost-effective public transit services, especially to accommodate the needs of the elderly and handicapped.

CE19 POLICY: Consider opportunities to support implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan regarding public transit programs.

3. AIRPORTS

GOAL C-3: An adequate number of safe, efficient publicly-owned airports and airfields.

CE20 POLICY: It is a priority of the County, in terms of air transportation, to maintain those airfields which remain under County management in safe condition pursuant to applicable State and Federal requirements.

CE21 POLICY: The County discourages and, when possible, will prevent development in the vicinity of publicly-owned airfields and airports which may present significant public safety issues and/or which could constrain the continued operation and expansion, as needed, of those facilities.

Implementation Measure:

CE-F The County will continue to refer to Airport Land Use Plans to consider proposed land uses around publicly-owned airfields and airports.

GOAL C-4: Progressive expansion of economical, efficient air services.

CE22 POLICY: The County encourages and supports the expansion of the Susanville Municipal Airport for purposes of public safety and to expand its capacity to accommodate larger aircraft and new air services.

CE23 POLICY: The County supports the development and use of the Amedee Airfield at the Sierra Army Depot for public and commercial use.

4. RAILROADS

GOAL C-5: Continued use of railroad lines in Lassen County for transportation of goods and compatible alternative uses, including the reintroduction of passenger travel.

CE24 POLICY: Seek ways in cooperation with surrounding northeastern California counties, railroad companies, and governmental agencies to retain an interconnected rail system through Lassen County and to maintain rail service to Susanville on the Wendel to Susanville line for freight shipping and possible future alternative rail uses including but not limited to excursion trains, motorcar excursion use and rail-cycling.

CE25 POLICY: If continuation of current rail use of railroads within Lassen County is not feasible, railroad right-of-ways should be retained for alternative uses including but not limited to buried utility corridors, access to and through public lands, alternative transportation routes and trails, and routes for railroad reactivation if rail use becomes feasible in the future.

5. ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC TRAILS

GOAL C-6: Expanded development and use of bicycle paths and pedestrian ways to reduce dependence upon automobiles.

CE26 POLICY: The County supports development and maintenance of safe and efficient alternative transportation routes that promote non-motorized forms of transportation for residents of more densely populated areas of the county to travel between home, work, businesses and schools through the planning, acquisition, development and management of trails in public right-of-ways.

CE27 POLICY: When projects are planned, and where a direct nexus between growth and development and the need for trails and pathways is determined, developers should be required as a condition of project approval to contribute to the development of previously identified public trail projects.

CE28 POLICY: If railroad lines are proposed for abandonment, the County supports placing the route in a railroad bank and/or the conversion of the route to a publicly accessible rail trail. (Note: The County, however, primarily supports the continued operation of all active railroad lines in the county for railroad purposes.)

Implementation Measure:

CE-G Appropriate ordinances will be drafted and considered to implement the policies of this section and related sections of the General Plan related to the development of public bikeways and trails.

NOTE: See related provisions in the Open Space Element.

6. UTILITIES

GOAL C-7: Utility transporting and transmitting systems which provide the people of Lassen County with reliable and affordable services.

CE29 POLICY: The County recognizes and shall refer to the Energy Element of the General Plan for policies pertaining to energy-related utility issues.

Implementation Measure:

CE-H The Energy Element shall be consulted as necessary for relevant policies pertaining to energy utilities.

CE30 POLICY: The County shall, as appropriate, refer to other pertinent General Plan elements, including the Natural Resources Element, regarding the development of new utility transmission and distribution lines.

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SECTION THREE:
BACKGROUND REPORT

3.1 EXISTING TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES

ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Following is a summary of maintained road miles in Lassen County by jurisdiction as of 1999:

Federal	761.3
State of California	303.6
Lassen County	905.1
City of Susanville	37.7
Total	2,007.7

Lassen County is served by one Federal highway and six state highways. These highways provide the main regional transportation routes for automobiles and trucks. The highway network includes US 395 and State Routes 36, 44, 70, 139, 147 and 299.

U.S. Highway 395. US 395 is primarily a north-south route connecting Lassen County to points north via Alturas, and points south, including the metropolitan area of Reno, Nevada. With the exception of a short four-lane stretch between the southern border of the County and Hallelujah Junction, US 395 is a two-lane highway with generally a 24-foot wide driving surface with occasional passing lanes. According to Caltrans, the average daily traffic count varied in 1996 from 1,400 vehicles north of Johnstonville to 7,600 vehicles south of Johnstonville. Level of Service (LOS; see explanation of rating terminology below) varies from B at the four-lane section near Hallelujah Junction and between Litchfield and Alturas, to D in some areas between Constantia and Milford. (Caltrans estimates of traffic counts and LOS ratings in this section have been revised pursuant to information provided in a letter dated October 20, 1997.)

State Route 36. Highway 36 provides regional access to Lassen County from the west via

the Lake Almanor Basin. This highway links to Interstate 5 at Red Bluff. Via State Route 32 west of Chester, it also links to Chico and other points in the Sacramento Valley. The portion of this highway running through Susanville (AKA, "Main Street") is a four-lane highway. West of this section it narrows to a two-lane highway. The average daily traffic count in 1996 was reported as 20,900 within the Susanville city limits. The LOS is D from the Plumas County line to the intersection with State Route 44. It is rated C between State Route 44 and Susanville and from Susanville to the junction with US 395. In the City of Susanville, the LOS rating is D. The section of State Route 36 between State Route 44 and Highway 395 has been designated as a "Focus Route". (Focus Routes are the corridors that have the highest regional priority for completion to specific standards in the next 20 years according to the Interregional Road System plan.)

State Route 44. State Route 44, which intersects Highway 36 approximately 7 miles west of Susanville, connects the County to Redding and points north. The portion of State Route 44 within Lassen County is a two-lane, 24- to 32-foot wide roadway with no paved shoulders. It had an annual average traffic count in 1996 of 2,200 vehicles per day. The LOS rating is C. State Route 44 is a "Focus Route" from State Route 36 all the way to Interstate 5 in Redding.

State Route 70. State Route 70 connects with US 395 at Hallelujah Junction and links the southernmost portion of Lassen County with Plumas County. The Lassen County portion is primarily a two-lane, 32-foot wide roadway. In 1996 the estimated traffic count annual average was 4,100 vehicles per day. It was rated with an LOS of C.

State Route 139. State Route 139 connects Susanville with Lassen Community College and the northern communities of the County via Willow Creek Valley, the north shore of Eagle Lake and State Route 299 in Big Valley. It serves the Hayden Hill area and connects with points further north via Klamath Falls, Oregon. Within Lassen County, State Highway 139 is primarily a two-lane roadway with 11-foot lanes and an LOS which ranges from A to D. Its average daily traffic volume varies from 7,700 just north of Susanville to 480 vehicles near the County's northern border.

State Route 299. Highway 299 connects the area of Big Valley with Alturas in Modoc County to the northeast and with Shasta County, Redding and Interstate 5 to the west. Within Lassen County, State Route 299 is primarily a two-lane roadway with 12-foot lanes. Traffic volumes ranged in 1996 between 1,450 and 1,800 vehicles per day and it has an LOS which ranges from A to C.

State Route 147. Less than two miles of State Route 147 runs through Lassen County and the community of Clear Creek, connecting with State Route 36 approximately five miles

west of Westwood. It is a two-lane highway and classified as a minor arterial. Highway 147 connects Lassen County with the east shore of Lake Almanor, Highway 89, and ultimately points south including State Route 70.

Caltrans uses a 20-year Route Concept plan to evaluate its highway system in consideration of projected traffic volumes, route importance, and available funds for maintenance and improvements. Routes are evaluated on a comparative basis by the "level of service" it will provide to motorists.

Level of service (LOS) ratings, which describe the ability of the roadway to accommodate the movement of traffic, are described below:

TABLE CE-1.
LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) RATINGS

A	Free flow driving. Unrestricted.
B	Stable flow driving but other traffic noticeable.
C	Stable flow driving but significantly affected by other traffic.
D	High-density traffic; stable flow but maneuverability severely restricted.
E	Road at or near capacity. Reduced speeds; extremely difficult to maneuver. Some stoppages.
F	Road overloaded. Driving stop and go; mostly stop.

Caltrans compares the existing LOS to a "concept LOS" rating to define the need for and urgency of improvements. A Route Concept Report is prepared to indicate where improvements are needed. Local input by Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) is used each year to guide the selection of projects. The need, scope and estimated cost of projects recommended and supported by the RTPA are further evaluated and defined in Project Study Reports prior to programming in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

The Lassen County transportation system also includes a county road network consisting of approximately 905.1 miles of roadway. Within the City of Susanville is a municipal street system of approximately 39 miles.

There is also within Lassen County a significant number and mileage of roads on Federal lands,

including lands managed by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management. These roads and the other highways and roads which cross Federal lands provide access for the use and enjoyment of the public. For example, the 1992 Land and Resource Management Plan of the Lassen National Forest reported that the Forest contained 3,472 miles of "forest development roads" (not all of which are in Lassen County). There is also approximately 1,200 miles of roads on Bureau of Land Management administered lands.

Federal agencies work with Caltrans and counties through cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding to address the design and maintenance standards of roads within their management systems and to help meet public needs regarding the use of those road systems. According to BLM, these roads are eligible to be part of the Federal Land Management Highway System under the 1990 Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA) and Lassen County could receive maintenance funding to help maintain some of these roads that provide primary access to public lands such as Smoke Creek Road, Wendel Road, Horse Lake Road, and others. Cooperation between the BLM and Lassen County could help improve road maintenance and improve public access to public lands.

AIR TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

There is no commercial air service in Lassen County. The closest commercial air terminal for most county residents is in Reno, Nevada.

There are five publicly owned airports in Lassen County. The Susanville Municipal Airport is owned by the City of Susanville and is the largest airport in the county. It is a "Basic Utility, Stage 2" airport. Charter service is available. The Airport Land Use Plan for the Susanville Municipal Airport describes the airport as follows:

> The existing airport occupies approximately 122 acres of land. Current facilities consist of a paved and lighted runway (Runway 11-29), 75 feet wide by 4,050 feet long. There is also a graded dirt runway with a 7-25 orientation. The existing dirt runway is approximately 2,600 feet long by 80 feet wide. There also exists at the airport a series of hangers, all of which are privately owned, and an administration building. A general aviation tiedown apron and taxiways leading from the apron to the runway also exists. There is a helipad on the airport for helicopter operations.

Improvements to runway 11-29 were initiated in FY 86-87 to upgrade the runway to Basic Utility Stage II requirements. This entailed resurfacing the runway, extending the runway to a length of 4,050 feet, acquisition of 4.25 acres of land for improvements, plus eight acres for aviation easements in the clear zone.

A Master Plan for the Municipal Airport was adopted in March, 1981. In the Master Plan, runway

7-25 was adopted as the future main runway. Funding for this runway was identified in the *California Aviation System Plan, Capital Improvement Plan* (Caltrans Aeronautics Program, 1995). This runway is proposed to be 5,660 feet long and 100 feet wide to meet the standards of the Federal Aviation Administration for a General Utility Runway at the altitude and normal maximum temperatures prevailing in the area. The length would accommodate all single-engine aircraft and most light twin-engine aircraft with reciprocating engines. It would also accommodate some lighter turbo-jet aircraft.

The County of Lassen owns and maintains a "Basic Utility, Stage 1" airport at Spaulding and three landing strips at Bieber, Herlong and Ravendale.

The Spaulding airport is located on the west shore of Eagle Lake between the lake and the community of Spaulding. It consists of a single runway 60 feet wide and 4,850 feet long. The surface is paved with asphalt concrete and is in good condition. The airport is unattended. It is intended solely for operation of aircraft using visual approach procedures and there is no beacon, instrument approach equipment, or fueling facilities. Landing lights were recently installed for the airport and aircraft will be able to control them with aircraft radios. The airport is relatively heavily used in the summer months during Eagle Lake's prime recreation season. Aviation use peaks in the summer to approximately 200 planes per month.

The Bieber Airstrip (also known as Southard Field) is situated on 60 acres of county-owned land 1.5 miles north of Bieber and west of State Highway 299. It consists of one visual approach runway 2980 feet long and 35 feet wide. The surface is paved with asphalt concrete. There is a beacon and low intensity lights which light the runway from dusk until dawn.

The airport at Herlong consists of a single runway 3,260 feet long and 40 feet wide, paved with asphalt concrete. It is located approximately two miles west of the community of Herlong and the Sierra Army Depot. It is intended solely for operation of aircraft using visual approach procedures. There is no beacon and there are no lights or instrument approach equipment.

The Ravendale Airport is situated on approximately 17 acres of county-owned land directly north and across Highway 395 from the site of Ravendale. It consists of one visual approach runway 2,900 feet long and 25 feet wide. The surface is paved with asphalt concrete. There are no lights and no beacon.

There is also a 7,168-foot airfield located on the Sierra Army Depot, known as the Amedee Airfield. At this time it is managed and used by the army strictly for military purposes.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Public transit services in Lassen County are provided by several operations.

The Lassen Rural Bus system (LRB), which is overseen by the LCTC and operated by Laidlaw Transit Services, is the primary provider of public transportation in the County. Although the present service is for the general public, the bus system is primarily used by the elderly, handicapped, students, and low income residents. LRB provides service to areas within Susanville and surrounding communities. Funding is provided primarily by Transportation Development Act funds, farebox revenues, and local contributions. LRB started a "Dial-a-Ride" service in September, 1992 to help meet the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act. This program provides transportation services on weekdays. Handicapped people are served by the lift-equipped buses operated by the LRB. People meeting predetermined criteria may also be eligible for subsidized vehicle-for-hire service. Senior citizens in Susanville who need wheelchair transportation have access to a lift-equipped 12-passenger van on a dial-a-ride basis.

Far Northern Regional Center provides transportation for persons with development disabilities through contracted services with LRB. Rides are available on both fixed-route and dial-a-ride services.

Taxi and "vehicle-for-hire" services are provided by the Mt. Lassen Cab and Shuttle Service. It operates private services as well as County-subsidized transportation on an as-needed basis and provides service from Susanville to Reno. Lassen County and the City of Susanville provide TDA-funded subsidies for eligible elderly and handicapped vehicle-for-hire riders in the Susanville area.

The Indian Elders Council (IEC) provides transportation services for elderly citizens. The California Department of Aging funds four nutrition sites in Lassen County; one in Susanville, one in Westwood, one in Bieber, and one in Doyle. The nutrition program is administered at this time under a contract with the IEC. Funding for senior transportation comes from PSA II and from TDA funds. Vehicles used in the senior program consist of two utility vehicles to transport meals to home-bound citizens and a small fleet of vans and a lift-equipped 14-passenger bus to transport seniors and the elderly.

Mount Lassen Motor Transit, Inc., based in Red Bluff, has a scheduled round trip between Red Bluff and Susanville daily except Sundays and holidays. Both passengers and freight are carried. Intermediate stops are made at most communities along the route.

School bus programs comprise one of the largest networks of public transportation systems in the county. The Lassen Union School District operates 32 buses and are the contracting bus agent for eight school districts. Big Valley Joint Unified School District transports approximately 324

students with eight buses and a 9-passenger van. The Westwood Unified School District operates three vehicles: two buses and a 7-passenger minibus.

Lassen Community College has five 15-passenger vans and a 48-passenger bus. These vehicles are used to bus students for sports, forest resources, and other events and programs.

There are no Greyhound Bus lines that currently stop in or travel through Lassen County.

RAILROADS

There is no passenger rail service in Lassen County.

Rail freight is carried primarily by the Union Pacific Railroad. In addition, Burlington Northern Santa Fe operates a line through Westwood and western part of Lassen County. A single track line of Union Pacific which joins the Susanville area with the north-south line and Union Pacific's interstate system was abandoned when Southern Pacific had the line in 1986. This spur is operated by the Sierra Pacific Industries lumber company to maintain service between its Susanville mill and the Union Pacific line at Wendel.

MOVEMENT OF GOODS

The main mode of transportation in Lassen County and the region is motor vehicles traveling on public roads and streets. Trucks comprise the major mode of transportation for goods and materials. Truck transportation is of vital importance to timber and agricultural interests in the county and truckloads of livestock, logs, lumber and chips are a common sight in Lassen County and on highways in northern California.

Other vehicles including buses, vans and private cars carry goods regionally and inter-regionally and contribute to the movement of goods in the county.

Most of the material carried by the railroads through Lassen County is loaded in and destined for other areas and is simply transported through the county. Commodities which are typically transported by rail include grain, heavy equipment, minerals and lumber and other timber products. Rail is especially suitable for transportation of objects such as pilings, poles and large trusses.

The Sierra Army Depot ships military goods by rail and truck, as well as by air to and from its own airfield south of Amedee. The administration of the Depot has joined the County in the past in efforts to obtain commitments and funding for the upgrade of Highway 395 to facilitate more effective movement of goods to the Depot and the County in general.

MAJOR UTILITY TRANSMISSION FACILITIES

Government Code Section 65302(b) identifies "local public utilities and facilities" as items to be addressed in the Circulation Element. The Lassen County General Plan Energy Element, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in May, 1993, addresses energy resources and utilities.

Two major facilities, however, are noteworthy in this Element because of their scope and regional significance. This includes the Tuscarora natural gas pipeline and the Sierra Pacific transmission line project.

Prior to 1996, Lassen County had no natural gas services provided to or through the county. In 1993, the Tuscarora Gas Transmission Company (Tuscarora) proposed construction of a natural gas transmission project to transport gas produced in Canada to users in northeastern California and western Nevada. The primary use for the gas would be to generate electric power at the Sierra Pacific Power Company power plant at Tracy, Nevada. Gas would also be made available for municipal uses to, among other places, Susanville and the Sierra Army Depot.

Tuscarora consisted of a partnership between Tuscarora Gas Pipeline Company, a wholly-owned affiliate of Sierra Pacific Resources, and TCPL Tuscarora, Ltd., a wholly-owned affiliate of TransCanada Pipelines Ltd.

In Lassen County, the portions of the Tuscarora project were:

One 20-inch diameter mainline originating at Malin, Oregon, and, as part of the route to Tracy, Nevada, traversing 100.5 miles through Lassen County;

One 10.61-mile, six-inch diameter lateral (the "Susanville Lateral") between the Tuscarora mainline north of Wendel west to a point near the Correctional Center. (A future project could extend the lateral west approximately ten miles to serve the area of Susanville. This extension is not part of the proposed Tuscarora project.);

One 5.45-mile, four-inch diameter lateral from the Tuscarora mainline near the California-Nevada border east of Herlong to the Sierra Army Depot (the "Herlong Lateral").

Meter stations near Susanville and the Sierra Army Depot and several mainline valves.

Due to the significance of the pipeline as a major utility through Lassen County, and the need to consider the compatibility of land use issues along the proposed route, the need was recognized to have the General Plan amended to specifically designate the route of the pipeline. Tuscarora filed the application with Lassen County for the General Plan amendment. The amendment was approved

by the Lassen County Board of Supervisors on May 23, 1995.

In 1994, Sierra Pacific Power Company (SPPCo) proposed to construct and operate a 345,000 volt (345 kV) electric power transmission line from the vicinity of Alturas to Reno. The line would connect SPPCo's electrical system with the Bonneville Power Administration and PacifiCorp power systems in Oregon and Washington. The proposed transmission line is approximately 164 miles in total length. A major section of the line would traverse the length of Lassen County.

The primary purpose of the project is to supplement the existing transmission capability of servicing SPPCo wholesale customers and to accommodate anticipated growth in the Reno area. Other benefits include the potential for the Lassen Municipal Utility District to tap into the transmission line to provide increased capacity, improved reliability and lower cost power. Also, the proposed transmission line could provide future fiber optic telecommunications to northeastern California.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has jurisdiction in California over the routing of electric transmission lines of this scale. Under the California Public Utilities Code, an electric utility must obtain a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) in order to construct a line, plant or system addition. A CPCN is granted only if the CPUC finds that the evidence produced regarding technical feasibility, financing, rates, demand, cost-effectiveness, existing facilities and service, environmental impacts, and other issues demonstrates that a project is required by the public convenience and necessity.

The CPUC requires utilities to consult and cooperate with local jurisdictions in planning and siting facilities. Furthermore, the Energy Element of the Lassen County General Plan requires, to the extent allowed by law, that proposed electrical transmission line plans be submitted to the County for review. Such review shall include public hearings before the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in order to solicit public comments and to aid the County in preparing its comments regarding impacts, routing considerations, and the General Plan consistency of the proposals (Policy 4.3.2.9(1)).

SPPCo submitted a General Plan amendment to the County to provide a forum for review of the project, as well as to enable the County to consider related land use plans and general plan policies to reflect and adjust for the transmission line route once the CPUC has approved the project. The Final Environmental Impact Report was certified as complete and in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act by the CPUC in January, 1996. The route of the transmission line is indicated on the General Plan Circulation Map.

Land use and development projects are often closely related to and affect, or are affected by, utility facilities and services. For example, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has mandated specific requirements for clearance between utility facilities and surrounding objects or

activities such as construction sites. To ensure compliance with these standards, project developers need to coordinate with the utility company that serves their project area (e.g., PG&E). Proposed development plans should provide for unrestricted utility access and prevent easement encroachments that might impair the safe and reliable maintenance and operation of utility company facilities. Because the relocation of facilities, if necessary, requires long lead times and are not always feasible as first proposed, developers are encouraged to consult with utility companies as early in their project planning phase as possible. Developers are usually responsible for the costs associated with the relocation of existing utility facilities to accommodate proposed new development.

Expansion of transmission and distribution lines and related facilities is a necessary consequence of growth and development. In addition to adding new distribution feeders, the range of electric system improvements needed to accommodate growth may include upgrading existing substation and transmission line equipment, expanding existing substations to their ultimate build-out capacity, and possibly the construction of new substations and interconnecting transmission lines.

3.2 TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The planning of transportation services and systems in Lassen County is accomplished through the coordination of various agencies and advisory committees including the Lassen County Transportation Commission (LCTC), representatives of the City of Susanville and the County, and an advisory committee which includes a representative from Caltrans.

In June, 1973, the LCTC entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). This MOU was updated in 1986 to replace two former committees with a single transportation planning agency consisting of representatives of entities affected by transportation policies and issues.

The State Administrative Code, relating to the Transportation Development Act, outlines the responsibilities of the Regional Transportation Planning Agency which, in Lassen County, is the LCTC. To meet these requirements, the LCTC undertakes an annual evaluation of transportation needs. The evaluation consists of identifying unmet needs, determining if they are reasonable to meet, and analyzing potential transportation projects to satisfy the unmet needs that may be reasonably met.

In 1997, the Lassen County Transportation Commission adopted the *1996/97 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP),* prepared by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc. Following an assessment of transportation needs in the county, the RTP includes three major transportation "elements":

1. A Policy Element, which contains the goals, objectives and policies pertaining to the

various modes of transportation in the county with consideration to related Statewide and regional issues.

2. An Action Element, which describes State and regional transportation planning processes, as well as the process used to evaluate various improvement options. Specific improvements are identified for short-range and long-range capital programs designed to meet the anticipated needs of the County's regional circulation system.

3. A Financial Element, which addresses the funding needs and issues of each transportation mode.

The LCTC is responsive to changing transportation and service conditions throughout the county. The Action and Financial Elements of the RTP can be amended as the need for new or redefined projects are identified. Policies can be changed when necessary. By law, the RTP is required to be reassessed, updated and readopted every two years. However, the LCTC considers only projects that have full concurrence of all concerned jurisdictional agencies for inclusion in the RTP.

In October, 1997, the State approved Senate Bill 45. This bill, which became affective in January, 1998, changes the State Transportation Improvement Program and gives more control to local transportation commissions over the use of State highway funds. The first planning program for improvements is a six-year program and subsequent programs will cover four-year planning periods. These changes were not reflected in the 1996/97 RTP, which is dated September 12, 1997, since the outcome of the proposed SB 45 was unknown at the time the RTP was prepared.

In some ways, SB 45 was modeled after federal legislation known as the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, or ISTEA, which was passed in 1991. This act provided transportation funding for projects across the country and included a shift in the decision-making from the state level to regional transportation planning agencies (RTPAs), removal of barriers to funding eligibility, and creation of new categories for funding alternative modes of transportation. The direction of ISTEA was reauthorized and continued with the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or TEA-21. This act increased total transportation funding, improved flexibility and increased funding opportunities for non-motorized transportation. For example, federal transportation enhancements under TEA-21 for smaller community-oriented projects was worth $60 million per year following 1998 in California with 75 percent of the funds to be programmed by local RTPAs and 25 percent to be programmed by Caltrans at the state level.

A "Social Services Transportation Advisory Council" has been formed pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 99238 to solicit the input of transit-dependent and transit-disadvantaged persons, including the elderly, handicapped, and persons of limited means. One of the responsibilities of this council is to annually participate in the identification of transit needs, including "unmet transit

needs" that may be reasonably met by expanding existing or establishing new public or specialized transportation services.

Designation of a "Consolidated Transportation Service Agency" (CTSA) was mandated by the Social Services Transportation Act (AB 120). In December, 1982, the LCTC adopted an Action Plan and appointed the Lassen County Council on Aging to act as the CTSA. In 1984, the Indian Elders Council was appointed to replace the Council on Aging as the CTSA. In this capacity they are legally eligible to file claims under the TDA and have the authority to make and enter into contracts to provide community transit service.

The RTP is closely related to allocations of Transportation Development Act (TDA) funds. TDA funds can only be used for street and road purposes after the LCTC has determined that there are no unmet transit needs which can be reasonably met. "Reasonable to meet" is deemed to be the ability of the existing public and private transportation services to be economically feasible to transport people in the outlying areas to population centers. In the case of the Lassen Rural Bus system and other transportation programs supported by TDA funds in Lassen County, economically feasible includes the ability of these systems to recover a minimum of 10 percent fare revenue to offset operation costs.

Functional Classification of Highways

The 1968 Lassen County General Plan Land Use and Circulation Map indicated the following types of highways and roadways:

Freeway or Expressway
Major Highway
Secondary Highway
Minor Road

For a number of reasons, some of the highway developments contemplated in the 1968 General Plan never materialized. Some may be regarded as "abandoned" in concept at this time. For example, Highway 395 was indicated as a "Freeway or Expressway", but the route of this Expressway would have been extended from Johnstonville north through Susanville and up the general route of State Route 139. South of Grasshopper Valley, a connection was shown running northeast to Termo where it reconnected with Highway 395's current route north toward Alturas. Another example is the State Route 36 expressway "bypass" which was shown to loop north of Susanville in the area of what is now Meadow View School.

The 1996/97 RTP prepared for the Lassen County Transportation Commission by Fehr & Peers Associates, Inc., includes Figure 2, the "Existing Functional Classification System" for Lassen

County. This map indicates the functional classification of highways and roads in the rural area (i.e., outside the City of Susanville) on the basis of the following designations: Interstate and Other Principal Arterials; Minor Arterials; Major Collectors; Minor Collectors; and Local Roads. All other roads are considered "local". These designations were considered in preparation of the General Plan Circulation Map.

The 1996/97 RTP also identified routes which are considered to be part of the "Interregional Road System". These routes are important to regional travel into and through the Lassen County and are regarded as regionally significant highways. Included in this classification as "High Emphasis Routes" are:

U.S. Highway 395 -	From the Sierra County Line to SR 36
State Route 36 -	From U.S. 395 to SR 44.
State Route 44 -	From SR 36 to the Shasta County Line.

"High Emphasis" routes are considered to be more critical to regional travel as they provide direct access between major urbanized areas. Other IRRS routes are intended to provide secondary access between adjacent counties, major commerce areas, or to major recreational areas.

Other Interregional Road System Routes through Lassen County are State Route 36 from SR 44 to the Plumas County Line, and U.S. Highway 395 from SR 36 to the Modoc County Line

Regional Transportation Plan Policies

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is the principal planning document for the coordination of transportation system improvements and services in Lassen County. The programing of State highway projects is a planning function through the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) involving the Regional Transportation Planning Agency and Caltrans. The following section discusses some of the findings and proposed policies from the "Action Element" of the 1998 RTP.

Under TEA-21, the programing cycle was changed from a seven-year program to a four-year program. The 1998 STIP will complete a six-year cycle and the 2002 STIP will be a four-year cycle. The Lassen County Department of Public Works will maintain a long-term program of proposed projects.

The Action Element of the RTP is a summary of the short-term actions necessary to achieve the county's transportation objectives. It describes the programs and projects planned to carry out the policies identified in the RTP's Policy Element, including a list of capital improvement projects for State highways, county roads and city streets, a listing of local government actions to develop and maintain public transit services, a summary of efforts to develop a regional bikeway system, and a

seven-year maintenance and capital improvement program for airports.

It should be noted that rail, intercity buses, and school transportation are not within the policy jurisdiction of the regional transportation planning agency and are not addressed in the policy and action elements of the RTP.

An adequate, well-maintained system of streets and highways is an essential component of Lassen County's transportation program. Although the expansion of the highway system is desirable, maintenance of the existing system is mandatory. A delay in road maintenance can result in greater deterioration and, eventually, increased repair costs. Without adequate maintenance, the County faces the costly prospect of having to completely rebuild sections of roadways. Policies of the RTP reflect the County's objectives to maintain its streets and roads as adequately as possible with the funds available.

The programming of state highway projects rests primarily with the California Transportation Commission (CTC). The CTC annually adopts the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) with a seven-year program of highway projects. The CTC is advised in the preparation of the STIP by both Caltrans and regional transportation planning agencies. As part of the process, the Lassen County Transportation Commission evaluates Caltrans' proposed STIP in terms of the County's regional policy statement, existing deficiencies in state highways, the long-range plan, and existing and potential funding sources.

The Lassen County Department of Public Works reviews the condition of county roads each year. Based on anticipated revenues, it then develops a seven-year program of projects. These projects are mostly programmed to maintain and rehabilitate the system now in existence. In addition to scheduled maintenance and rehabilitation work, miscellaneous projects are proposed in the event that funds become available.

The actions discussed in the RTP include constructing new roadways near Susanville such as the Richmond Road/South Susanville Bypass, the extension of Skyline Road from SR 139 to Johnstonville Road, the widening of SR 36 from Susanville to SR 395, and the connection of Skyline with the Richmond Road/South Susanville Bypass and SR 36. Other projects include improving existing facilities such as adding passing lanes on U.S. 395 between Susanville and Sierra County.

Skyline East, Skyline Extension, and Skyline South Projects were programed in the 1998 STIP. The Skyline East Project is, as of this writing (August, 1999), under contract for project engineering with construction to begin in the summer of 2000. Skyline Extension and Skyline South are under contract for completion of related environmental reports.

The LCTC has also authorized a corridor study from Richmond Road to State Route 36 for consideration of eligibility for construction funding in the 1998 STIP. Both new projects are proposed to help relieve traffic congestion on Main Street (SR 36) in Susanville.

Regarding airport improvements, the primary goal of the county as stated in the RTP is to continue to provide safe airports for general aviation users. The five-year plan provides for overcoming deficiencies identified during airport inspections. Major improvements are scheduled at the Susanville Municipal Airport.

Airport Land Use Plans

Article 3.5 of the California Public Utilities Code sets forth policies for the adoption of airport land use plans and the establishment and duties of airport land use commissions. The purpose of these provisions is:

> To protect public health, safety, and welfare by ensuring the orderly expansion of airports and the adoption of land use measures that minimize the public's exposure to excessive noise and safety hazards within the areas around public airports to the extent that these areas are not already devoted to incompatible uses.

In order to achieve the purposes of Article 3.5, the Legislature mandated that counties having airports served by scheduled airlines or operated for the general public shall establish an Airport Land Use Commission.

On April 8, 1986, the Lassen County Board of Supervisors directed that an airport land use commission (ALUC) be formed. It was also directed that the County Planning Department would serve as staff to the ALUC. The Lassen County ALUC held its first meeting on July 24, 1986 after appointment of members in accordance with the Public Utilities Code.

Among the duties of an ALUC is the duty to prepare and adopt airport land use plans pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 21675. This section provides as follows:

> The commission shall formulate a comprehensive land use plan that will provide for the orderly growth of each public airport and the area surrounding the airport within the jurisdiction of the commission, and will safeguard the general welfare of the inhabitants within the vicinity of the airport and the public in general.

The Airport Land Use Plan for the Susanville Municipal Airport was adopted on March 26, 1987.

The Airport Land Use Plan which provides for the four county-owned airports at Herlong,

Spaulding, Bieber, and Ravendale was adopted on April 28, 1988.

An important objective for these plans, along with protecting public safety, is to protect the viability and growth potential of airports as important transportation facilities. This is mostly done by providing a process for review of proposed projects which, because of their location near an airport, may create an incompatible land use situation. The primary method of addressing land use compatibility in the vicinity of the airports is to delineate "safety zones" and to establish land use criteria within those zones. The safety zones are based on the circulation of aircraft around the airport, especially over areas at the ends of the runway where aircraft approach and take off. The three principal safety zones are the Clear Zone, Approach Zone, and the Overflight Safety Areas. These safety areas are depicted for each airport on maps contained in the airport land use plans.

The land use compatibility guidelines contained in the airport land use plans describe land uses which are acceptable, unacceptable, or which may, with certain provisions, be rendered acceptable in terms of their location within the various safety zones.

The Lassen County Board of Supervisors has adopted policies for referring certain proposed projects, based on their location within the safety zones, to the ALUC and the County's consideration of the ALUC's recommendations.

3.3 TRANSPORTATION FINANCIAL ISSUES

Transportation systems require enormous capital outlay. Investments in existing systems must be maintained and protected. Therefore, the RTP concludes, maximum use and maintenance of existing systems have priority over expenditures for expansion, and low-capital measures need to be considered to increase the operational efficiency of the existing transportation systems including traffic operation improvements, effective parking arrangements, transit and social service coordination, and bike and pedestrian programs.

The Federal Aid Highway Act of 1986 provides money from the Federal Highway Trust Fund. This fund covers many highway programs for which California is eligible. Highway Trust Funds are administered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and are generally apportioned in accordance with a specific allocation formula for each project.

All Federal highway subventions made available to California must be used for capital improvements and are administered through the State Highway Account, including the part of these subventions directed into the improvement of county roads and city streets on a Federal Highway System.

Revenues from Federal highway-user taxes go into the Trust Funds. Sources are the Federal fuel

tax of 14 cents per gallon and excise taxes on transportation-related items such as rubber, commercial vehicles and lubricants.

Another source of Federal funds is derived from Federal property located within the county. Twenty-five percent of all revenue generated by the sale of products, including timber, from National Forest lands is returned to the county. These funds can only be used for road and school purposes. However, the reduction in the volume of timber sold from National Forest lands has reduced the amount of funds derived from this source. Other policy changes are also expected to affect and reduce this source of funding.

A small amount of Federal general tax funds is appropriated for roads in Federally administered areas such as Indian reservations and national parks.

Several County roads are used substantially by through traffic as connectors to and between various State highways. These roads include: A2, County Road 422 (Susanville Road); A3, County Road 301 (Standish-Buntingville Road); A21, County Road 103 (Mooney Road); and County Road 513 (Termo-Grasshopper Road). In some cases, signs and other policies and improvements by Caltrans actually encourage the use of these County roads as connectors and sometimes as alternate routes for sections of state highways. Increases in regional traffic volumes and a decrease in maintenance dollars have made the burden of maintaining these roads especially difficult for the County. The County, in turn, has proposed that the state should help the County with additional funding assistance to provide maintenance for these routes.

Transportation revenues are affected by the economic health of the area as a whole. Since the major transportation issue facing Lassen County is how to maintain and rehabilitate its many miles of roadways on limited revenues, the Regional Transportation Plan emphasizes prudent use of the scarce resources available and careful choices by city and county officials in setting transportation priorities.

Public funds can only be used to maintain pubic roads; that is, roads over which the public at large has a right to travel as opposed to private roads over which travel may be restricted by the private road owners.

Generally, the following funding options exist to pay for maintenance of public roads:

State and Federal Funds
County voter-approved taxes
Developer fees
Assessment Districts
Mello-Roos Districts

1982 Benefit Assessment Act
Community Service Districts (CSD)
County Service Areas (CSA)
Permanent Road Divisions (PRD)

The majority of new public roads are made through the subdivision process. When a local entity such as the County accepts an offer of dedication of roads proposed in a subdivision, such roads become public streets and are subject to public use. However, the acceptance does not necessarily resolve the issues of ownership or responsibility for maintenance. The County may have no duty or liability regarding the maintenance of the road unless and until it is accepted into the county-maintained system under Streets and Highways Code Section 941.

According to Civil Code 845, owners of easements in the nature of a private right-of-way have a legal duty to maintain it. Furthermore, if the easement is owned by more than one person, the cost of maintaining it must be shared by each owner either pursuant to the terms of a written agreement or in proportion to the use made by each owner. Any easement owner may bring a legal action to require other easement owners to pay their fair share of maintenance costs.

To provide for continuing maintenance of underfunded new roads accepted through the subdivision process, the County may require the subdivider to form a CSD, CSA or PRD (or utilize other methods described above). The new property owners would then fund road improvements and maintenance programs in the amount equal to the specific benefit of each property owner.

Although maintenance of streets and roads was given the highest overall priority in the RTP, it recognized that the area's public transit systems represent an effort to provide needed transportation services. While the Lassen Rural Bus system, for example, meets the mobility needs of elderly, handicapped and low-income residents who might otherwise be without reasonable mobility options, it also offers an alternative to residents interested in cost, convenience and environmental issues.

Airport Improvement Program grant funds are distributed at the discretion of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. At the State level, the aeronautics program is funded by a fourteen cents per gallon State tax on general aviation fuel and two cents per gallon on general aviation jet fuel. These funds support the operation of the Division of Aeronautics and provide grants to local agencies for capital improvements of general aviation airport facilities.

Transportation System Management

The goals and policies covered by transportation system management all relate to efficient management of existing facilities and prudent use of financial resources. This covers everything

from maintenance of existing facilities to concerns of bicyclists and provisions for adequate public transportation for those who need it. Some of the strategies of this program to maximize use of existing facilities include: traffic engineering solutions which will increase road carrying capacity without expansion; coordinated public and social service transportation wherever practical; adjustment of public bus routes for the good of service users; provision of bus shelters to encourage use of public transit; and support of car and vanpooling to relieve stress on the road system.

3.4 CIRCULATION-RELATED DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Lassen County has adopted and continues to consider and revise street and road standards for public and private roads related to land development and land use patterns. These standards may be applied to the division of land as well as to certain projects when a conditional use permit is required. The particular street and road standards applied to a given project or application are based on such factors as the existing land uses in the area, on the proposed use (including the size and number of parcels proposed), on the number of parcels served by existing roads, on the zoning of the area, and on the land use designations and anticipated future land uses pursuant to the General Plan and applicable area plan. (It should also be mentioned that whenever a road or driveway is proposed to connect with a state highway, the developer must meet Caltrans standards for the connection.)

Special road standards and related road maintenance plans are also of concern to the County when the roads are proposed to be added to the County-maintained road system. In January, 1997, the Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution Number 97-009 to address this issue. This resolution affirmed that, due to decreases in revenues for maintenance of public roads and the need to insure acceptable levels of maintenance on existing roads, it will be a policy of the County that no new roads will be accepted into the County's road system unless the roads have been constructed to a paved standard which is appropriate for the classification of road being offered for dedication for public use. The Board also stated that the County will assist those who desire to offer paved roads for dedication to form assessment districts or other funding mechanisms.

Lassen County's subdivision regulations are adopted as Ordinance 475 and subsequent revisions, and codified in Title 16 of the Lassen County Code. It is the purpose of the provisions of that title to regulate and control the division of land within the County and to supplement the provisions of the California Subdivision Map Act relating to the division of property. No land shall be subdivided and/or developed for any purpose which is not in conformity with the General Plan and any specific plan of the County or permitted by the zoning chapter or other applicable provisions of the County Code.

The provision of access and the standards of access roads to subdivided lands is an important element of the subdivision review and approval process. Chapter 16.08 of the Lassen County Code

includes "Subdivision Improvement Requirements" and states the intent of these requirements as follows:

> Proper subdivision improvements ensure that important social and economic interests of Lassen County and its citizens will be protected. Safe and adequate access for vehicular and pedestrian traffic is a fundamental part of land development projects and a requirement for County approval. To ensure these basic principles, the County has developed and implemented minimum standards commensurate with various land uses and road locations (Chapter 16.08.020).

General Land Development Standards provide that road patterns must be planned in accordance with area-wide plans of the County, affected cities (i.e., the City of Susanville), and the State (i.e., Caltrans). Certain areas of the County have been identified by the County Zoning Title (Title 18) as being appropriate for specific land uses. A number of subdivision development standards, including standards for roads, are based on the specific land use designation and/or zoning of the land being divided.

Generally, road design standards require that the subdivider design and construct all subdivision roads and streets in conformance with (1) the current Standard Specifications and Highway Design Manual of the State of California, Department of Public Works, Division of Highways; (2) Special Provisions provided by the County; (3) Special Provisions provided by the subdivider's engineer and approved by the County or (4) any combination of the above as required by the County (Chapter 16.08.080). Where guidance is provided in the County General Plan or any area plan thereto, road and street standards shall conform to the level of improvement designated therein.

Lassen County has adopted minimum standards for public and private roads and streets, and necessary easements, related to subdivisions. These standards are currently codified in the Lassen County Code, Chapter 16.08, and they are based on the consideration of the actual or anticipated land use of the lands being divided. The definitions of street and road classifications and requirements are contained in Sections 16.08.080 and 16.08.090. The actual road section diagrams for the different types of streets and roads are codified in Section 16.08.110. The types of streets and roads, and their relation to land uses, may be summarized for purposes of the Circulation Element as follows:

1. Paved Urban Streets

> Paved Urban Streets are required for land divisions in existing or proposed zoning districts which allow the creation of parcels of one-acre or less, or where the project site has been designated as Urban Residential by the County General Plan.

2. Typical Collector Streets

These streets will normally be designed through the "Special Designed Streets" provisions (see below). Generally, a typical collector street would be required for project streets which are to serve development on surrounding properties, either at present or in the future. Roads of this type will be considered to be taken into the County-maintained road system.

3. Paved Rural Streets

Paved Rural Streets are required when it is anticipated that, due to the General Plan designation of the area, the ultimate road standard necessary to serve the area would be a paved street, or for divisions of property where all resultant parcels are less than three acres, or where 20 or more parcels are served by the access road for the project. Roads of this type will be considered for acceptance into the County-maintained system.

4. Unpaved Rural Street

Unpaved rural streets are intended to serve subdivisions which are located in areas where, based on the General Plan, it is not anticipated that the ultimate road standard to serve the area would be a paved street, and for divisions of property where all resultant parcels are greater than three acres and where 20 or fewer parcels are anticipated to be served by the access road for the project. Unpaved rural streets will not be considered for maintenance by the County and, rather, will be privately maintained in accordance with Section 845 of the California Civil Code.

5. Rural Road

This classification of roadway may be allowed for divisions of property where 1) all resultant parcels are greater than three acres, 2) four and fewer parcels are to be created, and 3) where the County makes the finding that construction of roads to a greater standard or creation of a greater easement would be in excess of what is necessary for the maximum improvement of the project site and surrounding properties, in consideration of the General Plan, and that the road would not serve more than a potential of five parcels. Unpaved rural streets are not considered for maintenance by the County and will be privately maintained in accordance with Section 845 of the California Civil Code.

6. Single-lot Access Road

This classification of roadway may be allowed to serve parcels created by a subdivision where: 1) the project meets the requirements of the County Fire Safety Ordinance, 2) four

and fewer parcels are to be created, 3) the proposed road would not serve more than one parcel, either existing or proposed, and 4) the zoning of the project site would not allow for further division of the property. Roads of this type are not considered for maintenance by the County and would be privately maintained.

7. Special Designed Street

Special Designed Streets are required for divisions of property which are zoned for Commercial or Industrial use, or where use of the property is to be for commercial or industrial purposes, or where the current County General Plan has given the property a Commercial or Industrial land use designation. These street standards shall also be required for streets which are identified by the County or designated by the General Plan or any area plan as a Highway, Major Collector, Collector, or Arterial roadway or alley. Special designed streets will typically be paved. Standards for traffic index, structural section, right-of-way, maximum grade and all other technical aspects of road improvements are to be as approved on a case-by-case basis.

8. Partially Paved Roads

Partially Paved Roads are a form of incremental road improvement. Unpaved project access roads shall be improved to the paved street standard from the paved, publicly-maintained street or highway to a point along the project access road where 20 or fewer parcels are served by the road. The remaining section of the roadway shall be constructed to an appropriate alternate road standard.

Currently, applicants for land divisions are not typically required to improve a project access road from a paved publicly-maintained street or highway to a point beyond the boundaries of the proposed project site in order to satisfy the minimum County road standards. For land divisions which require paved streets and where there are two or more accesses to paved publicly-maintained streets or highways, at least one project access road must be improved to the appropriate paved street standard.

In cases where the land division application includes a Planned Development Permit application where a homeowners association is to be formed with the responsibilities of road construction and maintenance, the County may consider requests to deviate from Title 16 road standards.

The construction of improvements to adopted standards is not limited to streets, but also may, depending on the circumstances and expected land uses, include such improvements as curbs, sidewalks, driveways, drainage, individual or community sanitary sewer systems, water supply, utilities and street names and street signs. For example, all utilities within a subdivision designated

by the General Plan for urban residential, estate residential, rural residential, commercial, or industrial land use, or which are identified by the County as being consistent with such designations, shall be placed underground. However, the developer may request that the undergrounding requirement be waived for parcels larger than three acres in size subject to certification that, due to technical or physical limitations, undergrounding would be impractical.

Improvement plans are required to be prepared under the direction of and signed by a registered engineer and submitted to the County Engineer for approval. The consulting engineer is responsible for obtaining the approval and necessary permits of governmental or municipal agencies when their facilities are involved. Additional subdivision standards for roads and other improvements and for improvement plans are contained in Lassen County Code Chapter 18.08.

It should also be noted, related to Fire Safety Standards, that there are subdivision standards codified in Lassen County Code Title 9 (Ordinance 502 and subsequent amendments) which, along with other provisions for fire safety, address applicable road and street standards. These fire safety standards apply to all new development in the County. Development is defined as parcel map applications, subdivisions, and other development which includes commercial, industrial, residential and any development requiring a County permit.

Chapter 9.16 includes a statement recognizing that much of the existing development in high and very high fire hazard areas in Lassen County does not meet minimum standards for adequate fire protection. An example cited in Section 9.16.100(a) is multiple access and the fact that there are many instances where publicly maintained dead-end roads serve residential areas where multiple access is essential for residential safety and adequate fire protection.

An example of fire safety road standards relates to the grade of roads. The road requirements discussed above pursuant to Title 16 apply without additional requirements for roads having grades under eight percent. The standards increase with grades from eight to twelve percent to the point where roads which might not otherwise be paved must be paved. Grades over twelve percent (but in no case over 16 percent) may be allowed subject to other provisions, including the installation of an on-site water system meeting National Fire Protection Association specifications.

Generally, public and private road networks must provide for safe and ready access for emergency fire equipment. Road and street systems must provide maximum circulation consistent with topography to meet fire safety needs. Along with the need for multiple access and special grade-related specifications, other fire safety standards in Chapter 9.16 relating to subdivisions and roads include the length of dead end streets, size of turnarounds, bridges and culverts, and street and road identification.

3.5 SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

The 1996/97 Regional Transportation Plan considered a 20-year planning horizon (i.e., to the year 2017) to determine the roadway system improvements which would be required to support the General Plan Land Use Elements of Lassen County and the City of Susanville. The RTP referenced population projections from the California Department of Finance which indicated that the County's population would continue to increase from 25,900 in 1996 to 41,950 by the year 2015. Increases in the population as well as regional growth issues will directly result in increased demand and impacts upon various modes of the transportation system. The number of motor vehicles is projected to increase accordingly as well as the need for public transportation. Taking into account Lassen County's natural attraction for tourism and its location on the route from the Pacific Northwest to Reno, along with the projected growth of the local population, it can be expected that the capacity of selected streets and highways will become a concern. More trucks will be evident on the county's highways. The City of Susanville is particularly expected to experience circulation and congestion problems, in large part because of Highway 36 which runs through it.

The RTP projected that development of aviation facilities within the county will keep pace with growth and need. The possibility of a new east-west runway at the Susanville Airport, which would be more compatible with prevailing winds, will continue to be considered and potential funding sources sought. The County's "Airport Development Plan" and the Airport Land Use Commission will need to help provide guidance for the area's airports and related issues.

As the population increases, it may be practical to expand existing public transit systems to meet the needs of the year 2017. It is projected that, where justified and where and when funding is available, small scheduled bus systems may replace "dial-a-ride" type systems. As transportation costs increase, providers may be more willing to coordinate and, in some cases, consolidate services. However, the RTP still projects that, in spite of the increased population base, the rural nature of the county will still make it an unlikely candidate for major public transportation systems.

Two of the most significant circulation issues in Lassen County relate to Highway 36 in the vicinity of Susanville and Highway 395 between Susanville and Hallelujah Junction. These issues are addressed below.

Highway 36

Highway 36 is an important east-west highway and arterial for Lassen County and the region. It connects Interstate 5 from Red Bluff to Highway 395 east of Susanville. It also connects with other highways which serve Lassen County, including Highway 32 to Chico and Highway 44 to Redding as well as Highway 89 to Burney, Mount Shasta and points north.

Highway 36 passes through the City of Susanville where it is regarded as "Main Street". Because of local topography and established land uses in and around the city, Highway 36 is one of the few east-west through routes in the Susanville vicinity. As such, it funnels nearly all east-west traffic in the area, including regional truck traffic, through the heart of the city.

The average daily traffic was projected in the Susanville General Plan (adopted in 1991) as being between 6,000 and 22,000. This traffic includes through traffic, traffic destined for major employment centers east of Susanville, and traffic destined for retail and other businesses along Main Street. These heavy traffic volumes cause delays and queues, especially at the intersection of Main Street and Ash Street (AKA Highway 139) during peak traffic periods.

The Susanville General Plan projected that by the year 2010, the traffic volume on Main Street between the intersections of Ash and Mesa Streets could be as high as 34,000 vehicles per day. If traffic volumes on Main Street continue to increase at the historic 3.1 percent annual rate over the next 20 years, an increase of 68 percent over 1988 traffic volumes would result. This would represent the difference between the amount of traffic that can comfortably be carried by a four-lane arterial and the volume needing six through lanes. If widening of the highway through the city is necessary to provide six lanes, or even to add a fifth turning lane to the existing four through lanes, it will result in significant impacts to the business corridor, the loss of on-street parking, and will have a major affect on existing intersections from side streets to Main which are already congested at various times of the day.

Several agencies, including the City of Susanville, the Lassen County Transportation Commission, Caltrans, and the County of Lassen, have been and are very concerned with the need to improve the efficiency and safety of regional traffic on Highway 36, especially in consideration of the projected traffic volumes in the near future. A number of efforts have been made to study and plan highway projects to address the need for improved circulation in and around the city and to relieve the growing congestion and safety concerns related to Highway 36 through the city. This includes consideration of a "bypass" or alternate Highway 36 parkway route which would provide a route for trucks and through traffic as an alternative to Main Street.

In 1988 the Lassen County Transportation Commission (LCTC) established a "Highway 36 Task Force" to examine and make recommendations on possible "bypass" alternatives. In 1993 the LCTC requested and Caltrans has proposed to prepare a Project Study Report assessing the technical feasibility of the three alternative parkway routes identified by the 1988 LCTC Highway 36 Task Force. In December, 1993, the City of Susanville directed a letter to Caltrans re-affirming its support of the LCTC's request that Caltrans prepare a Project Study Report covering the three alternative parkway routes. It was emphasized in the City's letter that the re-affirmation is based on the understanding that the PSR is intended to provide information about the technical aspects of each alternative route, thereby enabling state and local officials to make an informed decision when

identifying the final preferred parkway route.

The LCTC has also made efforts to study and obtain state funding for other local routes (e.g., Skyline Road East) in the vicinity of Susanville to help develop alternative routes to relieve traffic congestion on Highway 36 through the city.

A Project Study Report to develop to four lanes the section of Highway 36 between Susanville and the junction of Highway 395 has been completed.

Highway 395

The improvement of Highway 395 between Susanville and the existing four-lane section at Hallelujah Junction has been an issue and a need recognized by a number of agencies for several years. In 1984, Caltrans stated in an Access Management Study of Routes 36 (east of Susanville) and 395 that this 60-mile section will be the most overburdened rural section in District 2 by the year 2004 if it is not improved.

The Commander of the Sierra Army Depot has expressed concern on several occasions that the upgrading of Highway 395 from Herlong south to a four-lane highway is extremely important to the efficient operation of the depot. Lassen County, the City of Susanville, and other local organizations have lobbied for the upgrading of the highway from Susanville south.

Several passing lanes have been added to the highway over the last ten years. Caltrans continues to have a long range route concept plan which includes initial widening and eventual conversion to a four-lane divided expressway or freeway. However, these improvements compete for funding with other major highway projects throughout the state, including emergency repair projects resulting from major damage caused by earthquakes and flooding.

The need for the careful management of access to Highway 395 has been identified not only to provide for the safe and efficient use of the route until it can be upgraded, but also to reduce additional complications and expenditures when sections of the route are eventually widened to four lanes. Statistics demonstrate a dramatic increase of nearly 80 percent in the accident rates of "conventional" rural highways which have cross traffic and higher numbers of access from adjacent properties as opposed to expressways where access is limited.

Portions of this route are already under "Access Control" where Caltrans controls the right of entry onto the highway. However, there are still significant portions of the route, especially between Milford and Doyle and between Constantia and the existing four-lane portion of Highway 395 at Hallelujah Junction which do not have access control.

In the 1984 Access Management Study, Caltrans states that for every additional road connection that is allowed or is upgraded, a new problem will be created. When conversion to an expressway or freeway takes place, median crossings, left-turn lanes, deceleration lanes and acceleration lanes will be required at substantial costs. In some cases, these new openings may need to be closed, requiring the development of frontage roads, additional right-of-ways or possibly right-of-way buy-outs.

Caltrans is concerned that they are not in the position to purchase access control in areas where they do not already possess it, and that they cannot refuse access to abutting landowners in these areas if "safe" connections are provided.

In the 1984 study, Caltrans expressed the need for the County and Caltrans to agree on a cooperative policy of access management which would provide firm and lasting protection for the future of Highway 395 and the portion of Highway 36 east of Susanville. It was the intent of the study to facilitate the preservation of desirable traveling characteristics of this route, including strategies for protecting areas presently without access control.

Other issues identified in the study related to this route include the need for cooperative Caltrans and County policies to determine minimum spacing of road connections, cost-sharing strategies, maintenance responsibilities, criteria defining private and public connections, and strategies for reducing the number of connections in selected areas.

Caltrans has stated that, as land division pressures grow in these areas, a logical spacing and limitation of the number of openings could be assured by the appropriate use by the County of zoning, land division control, and use permit control. The 1984 study suggested several methods for accomplishing this, some of which have been utilized by the County. They include:

1. One foot grant: Proposed land divisions adjacent to the highway right-of-way could be required by the County to include grant deeding of a one-foot strip of right-of-way (between the highway right-of-way and the subdivision lots) to the County for non-road purposes. This one-foot strip could be used to deny future highway access to abutting lots.

2. Relinquish right of ingress and egress: Proposed land divisions adjacent to the highway right-of-way could be required by the County to relinquish to the County or the State the right of ingress and egress between the adjacent lots and the highway right-of-way.

3. Frontage road buffers: Proposed land divisions adjacent to the highway right-of-way could be required by the County to plan frontage roads adjacent to the highway right-of-way.

4. The County could, in their planning process, show acceptable locations for roads which would feed into intersections with the through highway.

Even in areas which have access control, there are measures which the County and Caltrans could take to improve the management of access onto the highway and the future expressway. Policies relating to areas which have access control, as well as areas which do not, could include the following features:

1. Minimum Number: Limiting the total number of access openings and, where practical, reduce the number if it now exceeds the minimum. The optimum number may be two public intersections per mile in developing areas and one per mile in undeveloped areas.

2. Setting a minimum distance between openings. Optimum public openings may be ½ mile minimum spacing in developing areas and one mile in undeveloped areas. (Refer to the California Highway Design Manual.)

3. Convert Private Openings: When the opportunity arises, require upgrading of "private" openings which serve more than two parcels to "public" openings.

4. Cost Sharing: Establish a shared-cost procedure for the initial developer or applicant and subsequent developers or applicants in order to spread the cost equitably.

5. Settle Maintenance Responsibility: For the area of the road connection within the right-of-way, the county should assume maintenance responsibility. Those benefiting directly from the road connection should be responsible for the cost of maintenance.

6. Frontage Roads: Require development of frontage roads to prevent the need for additional access openings that exceed or are closer than the minimum.

The future upgrading of the highway to an expressway and the related design of intersections and off ramps can be expected to impact land uses along the highway, especially existing commercial areas such as those north of Doyle.

In some cases, the future improvement of Highway 395 may necessitate consideration of "realignments" of the existing right-of-way in various locations. This may be proposed to either avoid cutting a wider highway corridor through an existing community like Milford, and/or to improve the general design of the expressway, including a reduction of the number of necessary road connections.

As reported by Caltrans in October, 1997, a special Highway 395 study to be prepared by Caltrans has been funded by the Federal Highway Administration. The study will look at the feasibility of four-laning to expressway standards the section of State Highway 395 from the Highway 70 connection to Standish. To be included in the study is the possibility of realignment of County Road

A-3 and conversion of that road to a state highway.

Proposed highway improvements and realignments need to be considered not only from a highway design perspective but from an affected land use perspective as well. Existing town centers and highway frontage commercial areas may be adversely affected by the rerouting of traffic and the related design of intersections and frontage roads. The creation of new intersections may also be expected to create apparent opportunities for new commercial development and demands on the County to zone and provide for new commercial areas. These shifts in land use can be expected to have related land use compatibility issues with adjacent residential and agricultural land uses, as well as competitive issues with existing commercial areas.

It would be advisable for the County to work as closely with Caltrans as possible in the consideration of Highway 395 expressway improvements, especially in regard to the determination of public road connections and the route of any realignments. Although it is an important objective of the County to facilitate upgrading of the highway, the County will need to consider and respond to related land use and circulation impacts. It may even be expected that the County will need to make adjustments in its General Plan related to the upgrading of Highway 395 to accommodate and respond to related land use, circulation, noise and other issues.

As an additional note regarding Highway 395, the highway crosses several important deer habitat areas and movement corridors. Deer/car collisions have been a problem for the safety of motorists and the welfare of the deer. It is felt that the existing wildlife under-crossings which were constructed under sections of Highway 395 have been functional and effective in reducing the number of collisions. There have been requests for additional identification and mapping of deer travel corridors and the placement of additional under-crossings in key areas to further reduce the number of collisions.