Chapter 1 Introduction

This final joint document for the U.S. Highway 50 (U.S. 50)/Missouri Flat Road interchange project has been prepared by the El Dorado County (County) Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations, Section 14000 et seq.) and the U.S. Department of Transportation National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (23 Code of Federal Regulations 771). The County is CEQA lead agency for this project, and FHWA is the NEPA lead agency.

Section 15132 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that a final environmental impact report (EIR) consist of the following:

- draft EIR or revision to the draft EIR;
- comments and recommendations received on the draft EIR, either verbatim or in summary;
- a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the draft EIR;
- the responses of the lead agency to significant environmental concerns raised in the review and consultation process; and
- any other information added by the lead agency.

Section 77.110 (g) of the U.S. Department of Transportation NEPA regulations states:

> If no significant impacts are identified, the applicant shall furnish the administration a copy of the revised environmental assessment (EA), as appropriate;…copies of any comments received and responses thereto; and recommend a finding of no significant impact.

This document contains the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for this project that FHWA intends to sign after the County Board of Supervisors certifies the final joint document in accordance with CEQA.

1.1 Organization of the Report

This joint document comprises four chapters:

- **Chapter 1** describes the purpose of the report, outlines the organization of the report, identifies the selected project alternative, and summarizes the public review process and consultation with other agencies.
- **Chapter 2** contains a summary of oral comments received at the January 15, 2004 draft joint document public hearing held at the Herbert Green Middle School and a copy of all written comments received on the draft joint document during the 45-day public review period (December 22, 2003 through February 5, 2004). The lead agencies have reviewed each

comment and prepared a response to each comment related to the adequacy of the draft joint document. CEQA requires that the lead agency respond to all significant environmental issues raised in comments, and that the agency's response reflect the level of detail appropriate to the comment (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088).

- **Chapter 3** contains revisions to the draft joint document based on comments received on this report.
- **Chapter 4** contains references cited in Chapter 2.
- **Appendix A** contains a copy of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's final biological opinion for this project under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act (see the table under Section 1.3 below for further discussion of this appendix)
- **Appendix B** contains a copy of Caltrans Deputy Directive 64 on Accommodating Non-Motorized Travel.

1.2 Selected Project Alternative

The draft joint document (December 2003) prepared for this project identified the 4-lane tight diamond interchange configuration (2015) as the NEPA proposed action. The No-Action Alternative (2015) is also evaluated in the draft joint document. Two other interchanges designs were also initially considered to provide capacity until 2015, the modified L-9 interchange and the modified L-8 interchange. Both of these designs were rejected. The modified L-9 had more extensive right-of-way impacts than the 4-lane tight diamond. The modified L-8 interchange had traffic safety and operations concerns.

Under CEQA, the draft joint document identified a two-phase project as the preferred alternative. The Phase 1 project is the 4-lane tight diamond interchange (2015), and the Phase 2 project is the single point diamond interchange (2025). The draft joint document also evaluated the following CEQA alternatives: No-Project Alternative (2025), 6-lane tight diamond interchange (2025), and the 4-lane tight diamond interchange (2025). As noted in the draft joint document, the County Board of Supervisors will only act upon the Phase 1 project. The County would have the option of pursuing Phase 2, as a separate project, if the following occurs:

- future levels of service warrant construction of a Phase 2 project,
- funding becomes available to build Phase 2,
- the Phase 2 improvements are added by the Board of Supervisors to the list of Missouri Flat area Master Circulation and Funding Plan-funded improvements, and
- the Phase 2 improvements are added to a future Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

(See the Summary chapter and Chapter 1 of the draft joint document for a detailed discussion of the project background, approach, and alternatives.)

The County Board of Supervisors intends to adopt the 4-lane tight diamond interchange (2015) as the selected alternative in August or September 2004. The FHWA intends to approve a FONSI for the 4-lane tight diamond interchange (2015) after CEQA clearance is achieved. These agencies have selected the 4-lane tight diamond interchange for the following reasons:

- it represents the minimum design that solves existing traffic operational deficiencies at the U.S. 50/Missouri Flat Road interchange and provides adequate capacity until at least 2015,
- it has fewer right-of-way impacts than the other interchange configurations considered;
- it is operationally superior to the other interchange configurations considered.

Table 1-1 identifies the environmental impacts associated with the 4-lane tight diamond interchange and the required mitigation measures.

1.3 Public Review Process

Copies of the draft joint document were made available for review at the following locations:

- County Department of Transportation office at 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville
- County Library at 354 Fairlane Court, Placerville
- County Library at 2500 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park

Copies of the draft joint document were mailed directly to numerous public agencies. Notices of availability of the draft joint document were also sent to nearby residents and businesses.

1.4 Summary of Coordination and Consultation with other Agencies

Page S-11 of the draft joint document specifies relevant federal requirements, the documentation produced to comply with applicable federal requirements, and the location of the discussion documenting compliance with the applicable federal requirements. This information is also provided below together with the applicable date of concurrence with these federal requirements. Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act does not apply to this project since the project would not use land from a publicly-owned park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge or historic site.

Federal Requirement	Documentation Produced and Date of Concurrence with Federal Agency	Report Section in the Draft Joint Document (December 2003)
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act	Historic property survey report (Jones & Stokes 2002j); concurrence with the State Historic Preservation Officer received on April 10, 2002 (see Appendix C of draft joint document for applicable correspondence)	Section 3.9, Chapter 6, and Appendices B and C
Transportation conformity under the federal Clean Air Act	Conformity evaluation	Section 3.5
Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act	Final biological assessment (Jones & Stokes 2003); Biological opinion received from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received on December 9, 2003 (see Appendix A of this report for a copy of this opinion)	Section 3.8 and Appendices B and C
Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act	Preliminary wetland delineation (Jones & Stokes 2002k) and discussion of permit requirements; Verification of wetlands received from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on February 27, 2003 (see Appendix C of the draft joint document for applicable correspondence)	Section 3.8 and Appendix B
Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management)	Design hydraulic study (Norman S. Braithewaite 2002) and required findings	Section 3.7
Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands)	Required findings	Section 3.8
Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice)	Required evaluation	Section 3.2
Executive Order 11312 (Invasive Species)	Required evaluation	Section 3.8

Table 1-1. Impacts and Mitigation Measures Associated with the Selected Project Alternative: 4-Lane Tight Diamond Interchange

Impacts	Mitigation Measures
Land Use, Planning, and Growth	
LU1: Permanent right-of-way acquisitions from 19 parcels	None proposed
LU2: Compatible with planned land Uses	None proposed
LU3: No impact on community cohesion	None proposed
LU4: Consistent with local and regional plans and policies	None proposed
LU5: Potential displacement of 35 parking spaces at Prospector's Plaza	None proposed
LU6: Construction-related impacts	LU6a: Implement a traffic management plan
Community Impacts and Environmental Justice	
C1: Minor population impacts	None proposed
C2: Minor local tax revenue impacts	None proposed
C3: Minor local and roadside business impacts	None proposed
C4: Minor beneficial construction-related economic impacts	None proposed
Relocation	
R1: Displacement of 3 (Perks Court cul-de-sac option) or 2 (Perks Court realignment option) residences	R1a: Compensate displaced land uses in conformance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Polices Act[a]
R2: Displacement of 3 commercial businesses	R1a: Compensate displaced land uses in conformance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Polices Act[a]
Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities	
T1: 2005—Acceptable LOS at ramp junctions	None proposed
T2: 2005—Unacceptable weaving conditions at the U.S. 50/Missouri Flat Road eastbound on-ramp until the U.S. 50/Forni Road/Placerville Drive interchange is improved	T2a: Provide temporary ramp metering for the U.S. 50 eastbound on-ramp from Missouri Flat Road
T3: 2005—Acceptable LOS at all arterial intersections	None proposed
T4: Elimination of 20 park-and-ride lot spaces	T4a: Establish another park-and-ride lot
T5: Provision of bicycle lane and continuous sidewalks along Missouri Flat Road	None proposed
T6: Construction-related safety concerns	LU6a: Implement a traffic management plan
T7: 2015–Acceptable LOS and weaving conditions at all ramp junctions	None proposed
T8: 2015—Acceptable LOS at all arterial intersections	None proposed
Air Quality	
AQ1: 2005–No exceedances of CO concentrations are expected since LOS is expected to be C or better at all intersections and links	None proposed
AQ2: Temporary increase in construction-related ROG and NO_x emissions during grading and construction activities	AQ2a: Mitigate construction equipment exhaust emissions consistent with EDCAPCD requirements

Table 1-1. Continued

Impacts	Mitigation Measures
AQ3: Temporary increase in construction-related PM10 emissions during grading and construction activities	AQ3a: Comply with Rule 403 of the South Coast AQMD, as required by the EDCAPCD
AQ4: 2015—No exceedances of CO standards	None proposed
AQ5: Transportation conformity achieved and the project would not cause or contribute to violations of either the federal or state 1-hour ozone standard	None proposed
Noise	
N1: Exposure of noise-sensitive land uses to construction noise	N1a: Employ noise-reduction construction measures
N2: Exposure of noise-sensitive land uses to noise from blasting	N2a: Employ measures to limit blast noise
N3: 2015—1–3 dB increase in existing traffic noise levels	Sound wall is not acoustically feasible
Hydrology, Water Quality, and Floodplains	
WQ1: Changes in local stormwater drainage	None proposed
WQ2: Flooding and hydraulic changes	None proposed
WQ3: Temporary construction water quality impacts	WQ3a: Obtain authorization under the NPDES permit for permanent post-construction Best Management Practices
WQ4: Water quality impacts from changes in stormwater drainage	WQ4a: Obtain authorization under the NPDES stormwater permit for construction-related Best Management Practices BR3f: Limit in-water construction activities to the summer low- or no-flow period BR3g: Ensure that turbidity increases do not exceed central valley regional water quality control board standards BR3h: Develop and implement a toxic materials control and spill-response plan BR3i: Store hazardous materials at an approved storage facility
Wildlife and Botanical Resources, Threatened and Endangered Species, and Wetlands and Waters of the United States	
BR1: Permanent loss of approximately 0.0016 hectare (0.004 acre) of Weber Creek and approximately 0.0032 hectare (0.008 acre) of oak woodland	BR3a: Conduct a biological resources education program for construction crews and enforce construction restrictions BR3b: Retain a biologist to monitor construction activities within Weber Creek BR3c: Install construction barrier fencing around the construction area to protect sensitive biological resources that will be avoided BR3d: Conduct preconstruction surveys and minimize mortality to CRLF and foothill yellow-legged frog BR3e: Conduct preconstruction surveys to minimize mortality to northwestern pond turtles BR3f: Limit in-water construction activities to the summer low- or no-flow period BR3g: Ensure that turbidity increases do not exceed Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board standards BR3h: Develop and implement a toxic materials control and spill-response plan BR3i: Store hazardous materials at an approved storage facility BR3j: Minimize long-term impacts on woody riparian vegetation and associated habitat

Table 1-1. Continued

Impacts	Mitigation Measures
BR2: Potential loss of 0.019 hectare (0.045 acre) of jurisdictional seasonal wetlands and of 0.0055 hectare (0.01 acre) of non-jurisdictional seasonal wetlands	BR3c: Install construction barrier fencing around the construction area to protect sensitive biological resources that will be avoided BR3f: Limit in-water construction activities to the summer low- or no-flow period BR3g: Ensure that turbidity increases do not exceed Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board standards BR3h: Develop and implement a Toxic Materials Control and Spill-Response Plan BR3i: Store hazardous materials at an approved storage facility
BR3: Disturbance to approximately 0.1 hectare (0.25 acre) of Weber Creek and approximately 0.29 hectare (0.71 acre) of white alder riparian forest vegetation	BR3a: Conduct a biological resources education program for construction crews and enforce construction restrictions BR3b: Retain a biologist to monitor construction activities within Weber Creek BR3c: Install construction barrier fencing around the construction area to protect sensitive biological resources that will be avoided BR3d: Conduct preconstruction surveys and minimize mortality to CRLF and foothill yellow-legged frog BR3e: Conduct preconstruction surveys to minimize mortality to northwestern pond turtles BR3f: Limit in-water construction activities to the summer low- or no-flow period BR3g: Ensure that turbidity increases do not exceed Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board standards BR3h: Develop and implement a toxic materials control and spill-response plan BR3i: Store hazardous materials at an approved storage facility BR3j: Minimize long-term impacts on woody riparian vegetation and associated habitat BR3k: Enhance riparian habitat by developing and implementing a riparian restoration plan
BR4: Potential disturbance to 0.044 hectare (0.12 acre) of jurisdictional seasonal wetlands/drainages	BR3c: Install construction barrier fencing around the construction area to protect sensitive biological resources that will be avoided BR3f: Limit in-water construction activities to the summer low- or no-flow period BR3g: Ensure that turbidity increases do not exceed Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board standards BR3h: Develop and implement a toxic materials control and spill-response plan BR3i: Store hazardous materials at an approved storage facility
BR5: Removal of and disturbance to up to 8–12 hectares (20–30 acres) of blue oak woodland and an undetermined number of native trees	BR3c: Install construction barrier fencing around the construction area to protect sensitive biological resources that will be avoided BR5a: Minimize and compensate for impacts on blue oak woodlands and individual native oak trees by replanting oaks
BR6: No impact on special-status plant species	None proposed
BR7: Introduction of new noxious weeds or spread of existing noxious weed species	BR7a: Avoid the introduction of new noxious weeds or the spread of existing noxious weeds
BR8: Potential disturbance of 1 blue elderberry shrub—valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat	BR8a: Avoid disturbance of valley elderberry longhorn beetle habitat BR3a: Conduct a biological resources education program for construction crews and enforce construction restrictions BR3b: Retain a biologist to monitor construction activities
BR9: Potential disturbance of non-special-status nesting raptors	None proposed
BR10: Loss of raptor foraging habitat	None proposed

Table 1-1. Continued

Impacts	Mitigation Measures
BR11: Disturbance of nesting swallows	BR11a: Avoid construction during swallow nesting season or remove empty nests and prevent new nesting
BR12: Direct mortality and short-term disturbance of common slow-moving and ground-dwelling animals	None proposed
BR13: Short-term disturbance and removal of habitat occupied by common wildlife species	None proposed
BR14: Consistent with El Dorado County policies	None proposed
Historic and Archeological Preservation	
CR1: Potential damage to currently unknown cultural resources	CR1a: Implement procedures for the unanticipated discovery of cultural resources
Hazardous Materials and Earth Resources	
ER1: Change in topography from grading activities during construction	ER1a: Approve grading design plans consistent with County and Caltrans grading permit requirements
ER2: Potential for unstable slope conditions from grading activities during construction of embankments and cut slopes	ER2a: Approve final design plans consistent with County and Caltrans' standard earthwork specifications
ER3: Potential for structural damage from development in seismic risk zone 3	ER3a: Approve final design plans that are consistent with Caltrans and Uniform Building Code standards for seismic safety
ER4: Potential for structural damage from development on materials subject to liquefaction	ER3a: Approve final design plans that are consistent with Caltrans and Uniform Building Code standards for seismic safety
ER5: Potential for increased short-term and long-term erosion rates from grading activities	ER1a: Approve grading design plans consistent with County and Caltrans grading permit requirements
ER6: Potential for exposure of people to asbestos	ER6a: If unknown deposits of asbestos are found during construction, comply with El Dorado County's Asbestos Ordinance
ER7: Potential for exposure of previously unknown hazardous wastes to construction workers and/or nearby land uses	ER7a: Implement recommendations related to hazardous materials contained in the project ISA
Visual	
VR1: Changes in regional visual character	None proposed
VR2: Changes in views of landscape units 1 and 2	None proposed
VR3: Changes in views of landscape units 3, 4, 5, and 6	None proposed
VR4: Imperceptible changes in light and glare with 11 new fixtures at the interchange, 9 of which would be pedestrian-level on the overcrossing	None proposed
VR5: Short-term visual changes in views from construction activities	VR5a: Implement measures to minimize short-term light and glare on nearby residents from nighttime construction
Utilities/Emergency Services	
U1: No long-term disruption of services	None proposed
U2: Potential for temporary interference to law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency medical services	LU6a: Implement a traffic management plan
U3: Generation of construction-related solid waste	None proposed

[a] This mitigation measure is not required under NEPA or CEQA, but meets the legal obligation of a law other than NEPA or CEQA.