MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
County of Placer

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DATE: December 6, 2011

FROM: KEN GREHM / RICHARD MOOREHEAD

SUBJECT: **GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT - ADOPTING THE PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR AND THE HIGHWAY 65 BYPASS ALIGNMENTS**

ACTION REQUESTED

Conduct a Public Hearing and (1) adopt a Resolution to certify a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) and (2) adopt a Resolution to approve a General Plan Amendment adopting depicting the Placer Parkway Corridor and Highway 65 Bypass Alignments in the Placer County General Plan Policy Document.

BACKGROUND / SUMMARY

The Cities of Roseville and Lincoln have become major growth areas in the region and are anticipated to continue to sustain a large amount of growth into the future. The City of Rocklin has similarly accommodated a significant amount of growth and retains a large holding capacity even though it is geographically limited in terms of its ability to expand its boundaries. The Placer Parkway project and Highway 65 Bypass are major, limited access, multi-lane facilities that will promote better traffic circulation of new and existing traffic within and passing through the region. The need for such a facility was identified as far back as 1992, after the 4-lane Highway 65 was constructed and a significant amount of growth was projected along that corridor. The need to move local traffic and freight from the area via routes other than Interstate 80 became a regional priority.

The Placer County Department of Public Works (DPW) has collaborated with the Placer County Transportation Planning Agency (PCTPA) and Cities of Roseville, Rocklin and Lincoln to define a future corridor for the proposed Placer Parkway. The South Placer Regional Transportation Authority (SPRTA), JPA formed by the above entities, adopted an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under CEQA and an Environmental Impact Statement under NEPA, and approved the selection of a Placer Parkway Corridor in December of 2009. These environmental documents were prepared with a significant amount of coordination with state and federal regulatory agencies to define the best location for the Placer Parkway Corridor. A copy of the environmental document is on file with the Clerk of the Board.

Caltrans, in collaboration with PCTPA, the County, and the City of Lincoln developed the Highway 65 Bypass project and construction of the project by Caltrans is nearing completion. Caltrans was the lead agency on the planning and construction of the Highway 65 Bypass.

The proposed update to the General Plan includes the depiction on the Circulation Plan Diagram of the selected Placer Parkway Alignment, which will enable the County to protect the corridor into the future. In addition, Tables I-6 and I-7 are being amended to include a roadway standard for Placer Parkway and identify the functional classification for Placer Parkway. The proposed amendment will also depict the new Highway 65 Bypass alignment, and that a portion of the existing Highway 65 which will become a County-owned facility and amend Table I-7. Minor policy and tablular amendments are proposed to reflect the changes to the circulation diagram. No changes to any of the General Plan's land use designations are proposed as part of this update.

In summary, the purpose of this public hearing is for the Board of Supervisors to consider the following:

1) Consider the Final EIR/EIS previously certified by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority on December 3, 2009, and find it adequate for use by the County as a responsible agency;

2) Amend the Circulation Plan Diagram by adopting the Supplemental Circulation Plan Diagram (Figure I-8) attached as Attachment A;

3) Amend the original Circulation Plan Diagram by deleting the following outdated information:

   a. *"This road segment is a possible route being considered for the Highway 65 bypass Route Adoption Study conducted by Caltrans, the route is not considered as adopted or fixed alignment until such time the California Transportation Commission selects the final route."*
   b. Delete the depiction of the Parkway Alignment on the 1994 Circulation Diagram

4) Amend Table I-6, General Roadway Standards by Functional Class, in the Placer County General Plan Policy Document to add the category "Limited Access Thoroughfares" under Functional Class for the Placer Parkway with a proposed right of way varying between 500 and 1,000 feet, as shown on Attachment B (a right of way of less than 500 feet is possible with the proposed language);

5) Amend Table I-7, Functional Classification by Geographic Area, in the Placer County General Plan Policy Document to add the category "Limited Access Thoroughfares" and designate Placer Parkway as Limited Access Thoroughfare between State Route 65 to Sutter County and add Sheridan Lincoln Boulevard as a Thoroughfare between the City of Lincoln to Sheridan to change the presently existing Highway 65 to a County road as shown in Attachment B.

The General Plan Amendment was presented to the Planning Commission on November 10, 2011, and was supported by a 5 to 0 unanimous vote.

CEQA

SPRTA was the lead agency for the Tier I environmental analysis in which an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (SCH2003092069) was prepared for the Placer Parkway Corridor. (An EIS was also prepared to address impacts under NEPA.) The EIR considered five alternative corridors and analyzed the associated impacts on the environment. The SPRTA Board certified the Final EIR/EIS, and approved Alternative 5 as the preferred corridor at its December 3, 2009, meeting. Caltrans previously certified an EIR/EIS for the Highway 65 Bypass and has nearly completed construction of the project.

The environmental impacts associated with these alternative corridors were addressed by SPRTA during the environmental review. Each corridor was evaluated for its direct and indirect impacts including a significant evaluation of the cumulative and growth-inducing impacts for each specific corridor. Alternative 5 was selected by SPRTA as the preferred corridor and it also represents the corridor most likely to be considered the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative to the federal agencies responsible for wetland and endangered species permitting.

In the opinion of staff and supported by the Planning Commission's recommendation, there are no environmental impacts associated with the modification to the circulation diagram of the 1994

General Plan Policy Document in order to accurately reflect the Placer Parkway corridor that was selected by SPRTA in 2009. The major environmental issues considered by SPRTA are set forth in the certified EIR/EIS; an electronic version of which is included as Attachment C, and an electronic version of the resolution adopted by SPRTA certifying the EIR/EIS is included as Attachment D.

Pursuant to CEQA, the County is a responsible agency for the purposes of this proposed action. As a responsible agency the County must mitigate or avoid only the direct or indirect environmental effects of those parts of the project which it decides to carry out, finance, or approve, but must accept the environmental document prepared by the lead agency. The County's action is consistent with the action taken by SPRTA to designate the same corridor within which the Placer Parkway will be constructed. The County's action is simply memorializing the action of SPRTA on its General Plan Circulation Plan Diagram and by referencing the Parkway in the text of the circulation section of the Policy Document. The EIR was a program-level document, and the County is not proposing any other action or approval at this time. At such time as the County approves an alignment for the construction of the Parkway within the corridor, the County will be required to do project-level environmental analysis. (A Tier 2 environmental analysis will be initiated shortly which will consider the construction-level impacts of the proposed Parkway.)

Placer County is not a responsible agency under CEQA for carrying out the construction of the Highway 65 Bypass. The amendment of the Circulation Plan Diagram for the Highway 65 Bypass is simply to correct the depiction of the highway from the potential route identified in 1994 to the actual route under construction today. Because this action is essentially informational only and has no environmental consequences, it is exempt from review by the County under CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT
There will be staff time spent updating the General Plan, of which most has already occurred and can be absorbed into the department's operating budgets.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends the Board of Supervisors take the following actions:

1) Adopt the Resolution Approving CEQA Findings for Adoption of the Placer Parkway Corridor Alignment and the Highway 65 Bypass Alignment in the Placer County General Plan, attached hereto as Attachment A.
2) Adopt the Resolution Amending the Placer County General Plan, attached hereto as Attachment B.

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment A: Resolution Approving CEQA Findings
Attachment B: Resolution Amending the Placer County General Plan
Attachment C: Supplemental General Plan Circulation Diagram
Attachment D: Amended Tables I-6 and I-7
Attachment E: Electronic Draft, Partially Revised Draft, and Final EIR/EIS for the Placer Parkway Corridor
Attachment F: Electronic SPRTA Resolution # 09-06 Certifying the Final Program EIR with Adopting Findings

Attachment A:

Resolution Approving CEQA Findings

Before the Board of Supervisors
County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of: A RESOLUTIONAPPROVING CEQA FINDINGS FOR ADOPTION OF THE PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR ALIGNMENT AND THE HIGHWAY 65 BYPASS ALIGNMENT IN THE PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN.

Reso. No. _____

The following resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held December 6, 2011, by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

_____
Robert Weygandt, Chairman

Attest:

_____
Ann Holman
Clerk of said Board

WHEREAS, on December 3, 2009, the South Placer Regional Transportation Agency acted as a lead agency and adopted Resolution 09-06 certifying the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project (SCH 2003092069), and Resolution 09-07 approving the selection of the Placer Parkway Corridor, and

WHEREAS, Placer County was a responsible agency for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), in that the South Placer Regional Transportation Agency acted as lead agency by preparing the EIR; and

WHEREAS, a responsible agency is defined by CEQA as a public agency that has discretionary approval over one of more actions involved with the development of a project, but that is not responsible for preparing the environmental document for the project (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15367, 15381); and

WHEREAS, CEQA requires a responsible agency to accept an EIR as prepared by a lead agency, and to treat the document as being legally adequate absent specified circumstances not present herein (Pub. Resources Code, § 21167.3; CEQA Guidelines, § 15096, subd. (e)); and

WHEREAS, Placer County desires to amend the Circulation Plan Diagram and Tables I-6 and I-7 to reflect the alignment of the Placer Parkway Corridor as selected by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority, and

WHEREAS, CEQA would require the County to undertake its own environmental review only if, in the time period between the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority's certification of the EIR and the present, the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project or surrounding circumstances had changed to a degree requiring the preparation of a subsequent EIR or supplemental EIR (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15052, 15096, subd. (e)(3), 15162, 15163); and

WHEREAS, no grounds exist for the preparation by the County of either a subsequent EIR or a supplemental EIR to amend the Circulation Plan Diagram and Tables I-6 and I-7 to reflect the alignment of the Placer Parkway Corridor as selected by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority; and

WHEREAS, Placer County further desires to amend the Circulation Plan Diagram and Table I-7 to reflect the new alignment of State Highway 65 to the actual route currently under construction,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Placer County Board of Supervisors as follows:

A. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15096, Placer County, as a responsible agency, has considered the FEIR prepared by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority and has reached its own conclusions regarding approval of the action to amend the Circulation Plan Diagram and Tables I-6 and I-7 to reflect the alignment of the Placer Parkway Corridor as selected by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority Project.

B. Placer County is required to treat the FEIR as certified by South Placer Regional Transportation Authority as being legally adequate, as the document was officially certified and has not been subject to any legal challenge. Placer County adopts and incorporates herein, as true and accurate statements and findings of fact, all of

the statements, recitals and findings of fact set forth in all of the following: (i) the preceding portions of this resolution; (ii) the entirety of Resolution 09-06, by which the South Regional Transportation Planning Authority certified the Final EIR for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project; and (iii) the entirety of the Findings of Fact and Statement of Overriding Considerations, including findings regarding alternatives, adopted on December 3, 2009, in connection of the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority's approval of the Placer Parkway Project (a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A).

C. Placer County is aware of the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program adopted by the South Regional Transportation Planning Authority to ensure implementation of the mitigation measures for the development of the Placer Parkway. A copy of the Program is Appendix D to the FEIR, and is incorporated by reference herein. There are no mitigation measures applicable to this action by the County. Placer County shall comply with all applicable mitigation measures as it proceeds with further development of the Placer Parkway.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Placer County Board of Supervisors as follows:

A. The action to amend the Circulation Plan Diagram and Table I-7 to reflect the new alignment of State Highway 65 to the actual route currently under construction is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061 (b) (3), General Exemption, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the action to amend the Placer County General Plan to reflect the route of a roadway under construction by another agency can have any significant effect on the environment.

Resolution 09-06 -- Exhibit A

FINDINGS, FACTS IN SUPPORT OF FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR PRESERVATION PROJECT

(SCH. No. 2003092069)

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FINDINGS, FACTS IN SUPPORT OF FINDINGS AND STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR PRESERVATION PROJECT (SCH. No. 2003092069)

1.0 INTRODUCTION.

1.1 State Law.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 21081, no public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an environmental impact report has been certified which identifies one or more significant effects on the environment that would occur if the project is approved, unless the public agency makes appropriate findings with respect to each significant effect and the agency finds that specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological or other benefits of the project outweigh the significant effects on the environment. The State Guidelines ("Guidelines") promulgated pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") (Tit. 14, Cal. Code Regs. section 15000 et seq.) provide in Section 15091:

(a) No public agency shall approve or carry out a project for which an EIR has been certified which identifies one or more significant environmental effects of the project unless the public agency makes one or more written findings for each of those significant effects, accompanied by a brief explanation of the rationale for each finding. The possible findings are:

(1) Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR ("**Finding 1**").

(2) Such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding. Such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency ("**Finding 2**").

(3) Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR ("**Finding 3**").

(b) The findings required by subsection (a) shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record.

(c) The Findings in subsection (a)(2) shall not be made if the agency making the finding has concurrent jurisdiction with another agency to deal with identified feasible mitigation measures or alternatives. The finding in subsection (a)(3) shall describe the specific reasons for rejecting identified mitigation measures and project alternatives.

(d) When making the findings required in subsection (a)(1), the agency shall also adopt a program for reporting on or monitoring the changes which it has either required in the project or made a condition of approval to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental

effects. These measures must be enforceable through permit conditions, agreements or other measures.

1.2 Findings.

A combined Program Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") pursuant to CEQA, and Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA"), 42 U.S.C. sections 4321-4342, and CEQ NEPA regulations, 40 C.F.R. section 1500 et seq. has been prepared by the South Placer Regional Transportation Authority ("SPRTA"), in conjunction with the California Department of Transportation ("Caltrans") and the Federal Highway Administration ("FHWA") (the "EIR"). A Program EIR and/or a Tier 1 EIS are environmental documents which allow an agency to consider broad topics such as general location, mode choice, area-wide air quality and land use, and other environmental issues at an early stage of project development. A Project EIR and/or a Tier 2 EIS would then be prepared at a later stage to focus on a narrower geographical area (such as a specific roadway alignment) and additional details available at the project/Tier 2 level.

The EIR for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project ("Project") identifies significant effects on the environment which may occur as a result of the Project. Section 2.0 of these Findings identifies the significant environmental effects of the Project which cannot feasibly be mitigated below a level of significance. Section 3.0 sets forth potential environmental effects of the Project which are not significant or which can feasibly be mitigated below a level of significance. Section 4.0 summarizes the alternatives discussed in the EIR and makes findings with respect to the feasibility of alternatives and whether the alternatives would lessen the significant environmental effects of the Project. Section 5.0 sets forth a Statement of Overriding Considerations with respect to the Project.

Although the draft environmental document was prepared as a combined EIR and EIS, these findings are made solely pursuant to CEQA, and the combined EIS and EIR is referenced as the "EIR" for these findings. In a few instances, such as in section 1.4 of these findings, the combined document is referenced because it was published for public review as an EIS/EIR.

The Final EIR, and the administrative record concerning the Project provide additional facts in support of the findings herein.

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15091(d), by separate resolution, SPRTA is adopting the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program ("MMRP") to report on and/or monitor the mitigation measures and Project design features incorporated to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects. The Project Proponent, the public entity which will proceed with the next level of Project development ("Tier 2") and act as the lead agency for the Tier 2 CEQA review process has not been selected at this time. The Lead Agency is "the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project." CEQA Guidelines Section 15367. It could be SPRTA, Placer County, Sutter County, the City of Roseville, a Joint Powers Authority, or some combination of any of these entities. The Project Proponent and the Lead Agency could be different entities in Tier 2, in which case the Project Proponent will prepare a report documenting status of compliance with the Tier 1 MMRP measures, and submit it to the Lead Agency prior to the release of the Draft Tier 2

environmental document. The Lead Agency will include in their Tier 2 MMRP a summary of the status of compliance with the Tier 1 MMRP measures, including identification of Tier 2 mitigation measures that implement Tier 1 Mitigation Commitments.

The location and custodian of the documents and other materials, which constitute the record of proceedings, is Celia McAdam, Executive Director, South Placer Regional Transportation Authority, 299 Nevada Street, Auburn, CA 95603. Tel. 530.823.4030 – www.pctpa.net

1.3 Overview of Project and Level of Detail.

The Project for the purposes of the EIR is SPRTA's action to select and preserve a corridor for the future construction of Placer Parkway, a new east-west roadway linking State Route (SR) 70/99 in Sutter County east to SR 65 in Placer County. Placer Parkway is intended to reduce anticipated congestion on both the local and regional transportation system and to advance economic development goals in south Sutter County and southwestern Placer County. Specifically, the action by SPRTA is to select the corridor described in the EIR as Alternative 5, with a no-access buffer, as shown on Exhibit A of the resolution selecting the Project. With this action, local government agencies may take steps to preserve land within the selected corridor, using their own funds.

The planning for Placer Parkway involves two phases: (1) the present action, selection of a corridor ("Tier 1"), and (2) the future selection of a precise alignment within the corridor and a decision whether or not to build the Parkway ("Tier 2"). If a build alternative is selected and pursued after the second phase, the ultimate Placer Parkway Project would be constructed and operated.

As stated, the action being taken at this time involves only the selection of a corridor to preserve, which has limited environmental effects by itself. Physical impacts would only occur later, with construction and operation of future Placer Parkway. The ultimate Placer Parkway ("Parkway") involves the selection of a specific roadway alignment, and the design, construction and operation of the Parkway. Because future construction and operation of the Parkway is a reasonably foreseeable effect of the preservation of the roadway corridor, the EIR also addressed the potential effects of construction and operation of the future roadway. This discussion of the roadway is necessarily limited, however, because only the general concepts of the roadway design and location are known at this first, Tier 1, Phase of review. As a result, these findings reflect the level of analysis, impact identification and mitigation appropriate to the Tier 1 stage.

Throughout this document the term "Project" is used to refer to the selection and preservation of Alternative 5, with a no-access buffer with the attributes described in Section 2.6 of the Final EIR and these findings, Section 4.5.2., subsection "The Project (Alternative 5) - the Green Alternative." Where appropriate the term "Project" also refers to the ultimate Parkway. For example, most of the potentially significant effects relate to construction and operation of the ultimate roadway, and these are identified as effects of the Project, although they cannot be directly caused by the present action of the SPRTA Board. Where helpful for clarity, the document also sometimes uses the term "Parkway" to mean the ultimate roadway, including construction and operation.

1.4 History of Project Environmental Review.

Over the last 15 years a number of major transportation studies have been performed in Sacramento and Placer counties, and to a lesser extent Sutter County. Caltrans prepared the Initial Feasibility Study for Route 102 in 1991 (DKS, 1991). This study analyzed a new 35 mile corridor reliever facility to I-80 in terms of feasibility, scope, and priority. After analyzing the data from the local general plans, it was determined that I-80 would be severely congested by 2020 with LOS F conditions for about 3 hours every morning and afternoon. The study determined that a new transportation corridor between I-5 near the Sacramento International Airport and I-80 near Auburn was physically and operationally feasible, and could provide an uncongested bypass of the Sacramento area. The I-80/Route 102 Multimodal Transportation Study, which was started by Caltrans in the fall of 1992, was eventually canceled (DKS, 2000).

The Sacramento Area Council of Governments ("SACOG") conducted the Metro Study in 1989 to assess regional transportation needs in the year 2010 based on adopted land use plans, and develop a list of priority transportation improvements to meet those needs. Recognizing that the Sacramento area was not meeting federal or state air quality standards, the study recommended that transit and non-motorized transportation facilities and implementation of transportation control measures be given the highest priority. However, the study also recommended that a number of major roadway projects be pursued, including Route 102. It was recommended that all new facilities, like Route 102, be planned as multi-modal corridors (or projects). It stated that the debate over the timing of construction, the appropriate mix of travel modes, and design features in this corridor should continue, but in order to avoid precluding future options, the transportation corridor should be identified and protected (DKS, 2000).

SACOG, Caltrans, and Placer County Transportation Planning Agency ("PCTPA") jointly sponsored the Interstate 80 Corridor Plan in 1996. This plan focused on a 63 mile stretch of I-80 from Davis on the west to Colfax on the east. The objective was to obtain a consensus on a recommended set of specific improvements for the corridor through the year 2010. A set of concepts and approaches for the study were developed by the Technical Advisory Committee and presented to the public in a series of open houses in September and October 1998. Results of that study identified the need for auxiliary and High Occupancy Vehicle lanes in the Roseville area to accommodate forecasted traffic. These improvements are currently only partially funded (DKS, 2000).

In October 1999, the Policy Advisory Committee for the Placer Parkway Interconnect Study/Conceptual Plan voted unanimously to recommend to the PCTPA and the SACOG boards that a Route Adoption Study be conducted to establish a precise alignment for Placer Parkway to provide a connection between SR 65 and the SR 70/99. This proposed connection is cited in the Placer County General Plan (1994) and the Placer County Regional Transportation Plan 2027 (PCTPA, 2005) to accommodate rapid growth and development proposals in southwestern Placer County, south Sutter County, and northern Sacramento County as well as the combined need to improve goods movement in the region (DKS, 2000).

Between 2000 and 2001, SACOG and PCTPA jointly sponsored the Project Study Report (Project Development Support) for the Placer Parkway (PSR), which explored development of a

new transportation facility that would connect SR 65 in the Lincoln/Roseville/Rocklin area to SR 70/99 in Sutter County and the Sacramento International Airport. The PSR focused on avoiding growth inducement in agriculturally designated areas, preservation of a roadway corridor for through travel, and providing a true "parkway" concept. Meetings were held in 1999 and 2000 with elected officials, key stakeholders (local jurisdictions, resource agencies, environmental and neighborhood groups, and business/industry groups), and various technical personnel to identify concepts for the proposed Placer Parkway and establish its goals. Also, the PSR preliminarily identified the Placer Parkway purpose and need, policy direction, a brief corridor concept analysis followed by a recommendation, and a cost estimate. A Preliminary Environmental Assessment Report was also prepared, which analyzed the general potential for environmental impacts (DKS, 2001).

The process from the PSR to the Final EIR and Preferred Alternative is summarized below:

- **2003.**
  - Public scoping meetings were held in Roseville (Placer County) and Pleasant Grove (Sutter County) to receive comments on the scope and content of the Tier 1 EIS/EIR.
  - Environmental screening criteria were developed for identification of corridor alignment alternatives to be evaluated in a Tier 1 EIS/EIR (URS and DKS, 2004).
  - Engineering criteria were developed to allow for the future design of a safe facility, including a divided, controlled access facility with full access control, a design speed of 70 mph and minimum horizontal curve radius of 4,600 feet (URS and DKS, 2004);
- **2003-2004.** Environmental and transportation screening of alternatives identified, using available Geographic Information Systems (GIS) databases and interpreted through an interactive GIS interface called Community Viz® that provides for spatial analyses of multiple resources. (URS and DKS, 2004);
- **2004.**
  - A number of other corridor alignment alternatives were identified, evaluated, and refined via the screening process to avoid or reduce effects on natural and community resources or to better meet the transportation needs. These other alternatives were developed based on interdisciplinary workshops, advisory committee input, and coordination with local jurisdictions.
  - Public meetings were held in Roseville (Placer County) and Pleasant Grove (Sutter County) to receive feedback on four potential corridor alignment alternatives identified for study in the Tier 1 EIS/EIR.
- **2004-2005.** An iterative evaluation was conducted of other alignments proposed by private parties and resource agency staff, with further consultation and attempts to avoid or reduce potential impacts.

- **2005.** SPRTA approved five corridor alignment alternatives, plus the No-Build Alternative, for study in Tier 1 EIS/EIR.

- **2003-2009.** A federal coordination process was conducted, based on the NEPA/404 process set forth in the 1993 Memorandum of Understanding between federal agencies, (FHWA et al., 1993) and modified for Tier 1 to reflect decisions made at Tier 1, and to anticipate the permit application requirements at Tier 2. The goal of the modified NEPA/404 process for Tier 1 is to ensure that Tier 1 decisions reflect careful consideration of the 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230), which are binding, substantive regulations implementing the Clean Water Act. The modified process for Tier 1 commits the agencies to seek concurrence on five points:

    1. Purpose and Need
    2. Criteria for Selecting the Range of Alternatives
    3. Range of Alternatives
    4. Alternative(s) Most Likely to Contain the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative
    5. Mitigation Framework

The Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR was circulated for public comment from July 2, 2007 through September 25, 2007, in compliance with NEPA and CEQA. Public hearings to receive comments on the Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR were held on August 6 and August 8, 2007, as described in more detail in Section 2.8.

A Partially Revised Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR was circulated for public comment from January 30, 2009 through May 11, 2009, in compliance with NEPA and CEQA. Public hearings to receive comments on the Partially Revised Draft Tier 1 EIS/EIR were held on February 23 and February 25, 2009, as described in more detail in Section 2.8.

The Final EIR consists of the Draft and Partially Revised Draft EIRs as described above, and the Final EIR document which includes text revisions to the Draft made as a result of responses to comments and all the public comments on the Draft EIR and responses to those comments. Together, these documents, including their attachments and appendices, constitute the Final EIR. These Findings incorporate the Final EIR and refer to the Final EIR as appropriate. In some cases, these Findings specifically reference the Draft EIR because the primary analysis of a particular issue is found in the Draft EIR. In other cases, these Findings reference the Final EIR or use the shorter form "EIR" to encompass all the documents that make up the Final EIR.

2.0 FINDINGS REGARDING IMPACTS THAT CANNOT BE MITIGATED BELOW A LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE.

The following sets forth all significant effects of the Project, including cumulative effects, and with respect to each effect, makes one or more of the findings set forth in the Introduction above, states facts in support of such findings, and as appropriate, refers to the Statement of Overriding Considerations which is attached hereto.

Among the facts in support of findings are several categories related to reducing impacts. Avoidance and minimization strategies are steps that were taken during Tier 1 planning to avoid sensitive resources and minimize impacts. Consultation and coordination are actions which should be undertaken by the Project Proponent during Tier 2. Mitigation commitments are specific measures which will be implemented during Tier 2. Mitigation considerations are approaches which should be addressed during Tier 2 planning by the Project Proponent and/or Lead Agency; because the ability to accomplish reductions in some impacts depends on site and design considerations, specific mitigation measures cannot be developed until Tier 2.

2.1 Land Use.

2.1.1 Significant Effect: Land Use Conversion. The Project will convert agricultural lands to a transportation facility.[1] Because of the extent of agricultural lands affected and the scarcity of opportunities to replace existing agricultural uses, SPRTA has determined that no feasible mitigation strategies are available to reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Findings. The SPRTA Board ("Board") hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- The Project would affect the least total acreage – 1,623.47 acres. Impacts related to land conversion would be significant and unavoidable because all alternatives would result in conversion of substantial amounts of agricultural land to infrastructure-related uses.

[1] As explained in Section 1.3, the analysis in these Findings is based on the current action, which is approval of a corridor for preservation, within which the future Placer Parkway will be preliminarily designed, analyzed in a Tier 2 or project level EIR, and, if pursued after Tier 2 analysis, constructed and operated. The analysis and impact conclusions in the EIR and the Findings address effects of future construction and operation of Placer Parkway as reasonably foreseeable effects of preservation of the roadway corridor, even though the action before the SPRTA Board at this time is limited to preservation of a corridor, which will have only limited environmental impacts.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid land use conversion impacts. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of Project Study Report (PSR) conceptual corridor alignments (see Section 2.5 of Draft EIR).

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4 of Draft EIR). These avoidance alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made to avoid land use conversion, including parcel bisection. These efforts included:

  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to avoid inducing urban growth in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and to maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.

  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone (see Section 2.2.4 of Draft EIR) that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone.

- During the Tier 1 environmental review process, PCTPA worked with local jurisdictions to avoid and/or minimize impacts on future planned development within the study area. The Parkway could bring greater certainty to future land use planning efforts by defining the location of important transportation infrastructure.

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- The Project Proponent will continue to work with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to avoid or minimize impacts on planned and proposed development within the study area. Coordination will include development of specific design details for the Parkway and other projects to minimize impacts, such as landscaping treatments, lighting details, etc. The Project Proponent will continue to provide these agencies with Parkway alignment information to assist in their processing of development applications relative to the selected corridor.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To maintain existing and future local roadway connectivity (for emergency access, farming operations and community access), which will contribute to

avoidance of land use conversion, over-crossings will be constructed, as appropriate, to convey traffic over the Parkway. These over-crossings would not connect to the Parkway.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- In consultation with local jurisdictions, strategies considered at Tier 2 will include efforts in the design of the Parkway to avoid or reduce impacts, such as:
  - Appropriate adjustments to the location of the actual roadway within the Parkway corridor alignment.
  - Provision of alternative access to remnant parcels.
  - Determination of the number, location and design of specific features such as over-crossings.
- At Tier 2, the identification of bisected parcels would enable parcel-specific mitigation to be developed. Strategies to reduce impacts on individual affected parcels could include providing access between the remnant portions of bisected parcels via frontage roads and overcrossings, crafting agreements with agricultural property owners that would include residual rights provisions to encourage continuation of farming activities in the area of the buffer zone that would not be used for the Parkway, or rezoning or purchasing remnant parcels that would no longer be viable for continued use under existing zoning. Any property purchases would comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation and Assistance Real Properties Acquisition Act.

2.1.2 Significant Effect: Compatibility with Proposed Land Uses. Adoption of a Parkway corridor alignment through several developments would, of necessity, affect the development plans, because subsequently the developments would need to accommodate the corridor alignment selected. The Project could also potentially benefit these projects by lending certainty to the location of a major transportation corridor that has been planned for some time but not adopted. Because there is uncertainty with respect to the adjacent land uses and their timing, relative to the timing of the Project, this impact is considered potentially significant.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The same Tier 1 Avoidance/Minimization Strategies, Tier 2 Consultation/Coordination, and Tier 2 Mitigation Commitments described in Finding 2.1.2 also apply to this Finding and provide facts to support the Finding.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- In consultation with local jurisdictions, strategies considered at Tier 2 will include efforts in the design of the Parkway to avoid or reduce impacts, such as:
  - Appropriate adjustments to the location of the actual roadway within the Parkway corridor alignment.
  - Partnering with local jurisdictions to institute land use controls (if local jurisdictions deem these necessary or desirable), such as general plan amendments, zoning/overlay zoning changes, covenants/deed restrictions, agricultural/ conservation easements, and urban growth boundaries.
- Suggested mechanisms to reduce land use compatibility impacts are land purchase/leases that would allow for continued use of the buffer for agricultural purposes.

Other Facts

- All of the build alternatives would affect the ongoing planning processes for the Placer Ranch Specific Plan, Brookfield, the Reason Farms Master Plan update, and the approved Sutter Pointe Specific Plan. Alternatives 1 and 2 would also affect the approved Regional University Specific Plan and the Curry Creek Community Plan, which is still in the conceptual stage. Alternatives 4 and 5 (the Project) represent the general alignment approved by Sutter County in its Sutter Pointe Specific Plan. No further mitigation is available because SPRTA has no authority over local jurisdictions' planning processes or land uses, or the timing of the ongoing planning processes in the study area.

2.1.3 Significant Effect: Consistency with Applicable General Plan Policies. Sutter County General Plan policy 6.A.1 requires the County to preserve agriculturally designated areas for agricultural uses and direct nonagricultural development to areas designated for urban/suburban growth, or rural communities and/or cities. A small portion of each alternative lies within land designated as agricultural in Sutter County. All alternatives would conflict with this policy. There are no feasible measures to preserve this existing agricultural land in Sutter County affected by the Parkway, and meet the purpose and need to connect SR 65 with SR 70/99.

- Placer County General Plan policies 7.A.1, 7.A.2, 7.A.3, 7.A.7, 1.H.3, and 1.H.4 are aimed generally at preserving farmland and agricultural uses in the study area. The Project would conflict with these policies by dividing and or diminishing some agricultural parcels.

Four Sunset Industrial Area Plan policies, 1.E.1, 1.E.2, 1.E.3, and 1.E.4, are identical to Placer County General Plan policies 7.A.1, 7.A.2, 7.A.3, and 7.A.7, respectively, and the Parkway would also conflict with these policies.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- All Placer Parkway alternatives would conflict with Sutter County Policy 6.A.1, use land currently designated agricultural; they could divide parcels currently used for agriculture and would diminish the size of some agricultural parcels.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The same Tier 1 Avoidance/Minimization Strategies, Tier 2 Consultation/Coordination, and Tier 2 Mitigation Commitments described in Finding 2.2.1 also apply to this Finding and provide facts to support the Finding.

- The only potential mitigation strategy would be to amend applicable plan policies related to preservation of agricultural lands, which SPRTA has determined would not be feasible, because preservation of agricultural lands is a strongly-held value in both Sutter and Placer counties. Prior actions taken by Boards of Supervisors of both counties have examined this issue as it relates to agricultural impacts of other large projects, including the Placer Vineyards Specific Plan, the Regional University Specific Plan, and the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, and have not identified amendment of plan policies related to preservation of agricultural lands in a manner which would eliminate this conflict.

2.2 Farmland.

2.2.1 Significant Effect: Farmland Conversion. The Parkway would convert 1,578.36 acres of farmland. This would be a significant and unavoidable impact because this is a substantial amount of farmland conversion, and converting substantial amounts of farmland is inconsistent with state and county goals and policies relative to the importance of maintaining farmland resources. The Parkway would also contribute to cumulative losses of agricultural land, with an estimated 15,752.54 acres of farmland potentially lost due to cumulative projects (excluding the Project).

The Project includes a no-development buffer zone. It is not known at this time if all of the no-development buffer zone adjacent to the Placer Parkway would be viable for farmland, because of the potential for parcel splitting or other impacts on particular farm units such as the proximity of remnant parcels to overhead power lines or other constraints to continued farming. In addition, some of the land may be converted to non agricultural uses before Placer Parkway is implemented. SPRTA will participate in any fair share mitigation

strategy that may be adopted by Placer and Sutter County Agricultural Commissioners or the respective counties. Because of the uncertainty over future conditions, and the level of fair share mitigation, if any, that may be adopted in the future, SPRTA has determined that this impact is not completely mitigated and a significant and unavoidable impact remains.

Other changes in the existing environment that could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use include bisecting agricultural parcels. If the bisected parcels are no longer easily accessible or are too small for large-scale agricultural use, these parcels could be taken out of agricultural uses, or converted to small-scale agriculture if economically feasible. This is a potentially significant impact. Mitigation strategies could reduce the level of impact, but potentially not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, this impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project could be reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- Among the alternatives, the Project would impact the least amount of acres of farmland within the study area.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the Draft EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid environmental impacts, including farmland impacts. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of Project Study Report (PSR) Conceptual corridor alignments (see Section 2.5 of the Draft EIR). These efforts include:

  - Elimination of a northern alignment between State Route (SR) 70/99 and Amoruso Acres, and a connection to SR 70/99 north of Sankey Road, because of a number of impacts including effects on farmland.

  - Modifications to generally avoid or minimize impacts to farmland.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made to avoid impacts on farmlands. These efforts included:

- The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to avoid inducing urban growth in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and to maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.

- The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone (see Sections 2.2.4.1 and 2.2.4.2 of the EIR) that, depending on its final width, will preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone.

- During the Tier 1 environmental review process, PCTPA worked with local jurisdictions and agricultural property owners to plan for the Parkway and planned/proposed development to reduce the likelihood of environmental impacts, including farmland impacts. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments.

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of farmland impacts. Coordination will include development of specific design details for the Parkway and other proposed projects to minimize impacts, including locating the roadway footprint to minimize bisecting farm units, identifying local access requirements, and retaining farming within corridor buffers where feasible.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To maintain existing and future local roadway connectivity (for emergency access, farming operations and community access), which will help to avoid/minimize future farmland impacts, over-crossings will be constructed, as appropriate, to convey traffic over the Parkway. These over-crossings will not connect to the Parkway.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Based on consultation with local jurisdictions, Tier 2 mitigation strategies will include the development of design improvements to reduce farmland impacts, such as:

  - Appropriate adjustments to the location of the actual roadway within the Parkway corridor alignment;

  - Partnering with local jurisdictions to institute land use controls (if local jurisdictions deem these necessary or desirable), such as general plan amendments, zoning/overlay zoning changes, covenants/deed restrictions, agricultural/conservation easements, and urban growth boundaries; and

- Determination of the number, location and design of specific features such as over-crossings.

- Farmland impacts could be reduced via land purchase/leases that would allow for continued use of the no-development buffer zone for agricultural purposes.

- Conversion of farmland to nonfarmland uses could be mitigated by preserving an equal amount of agricultural land within the respective counties in those areas that have not been approved or proposed for urban uses (i.e., primarily in the Central Segment). This would be consistent with Placer County's current policy of requiring one-to-one (1:1) replacement for agricultural land impacted by proposed projects where feasible. The no-development buffer zone as proposed would meet much of this mitigation goal subject to performance standards to be developed in Tier 2. This mitigation strategy should be coordinated with the Placer and Sutter County Agricultural Commissioners, particularly in areas where agricultural lands will have been converted to other uses prior to Placer Parkway Tier 2 environmental review, to ensure that a fair share mitigation strategy is promoted. This mitigation strategy would reduce impacts to farmlands.

- Agricultural easements administered by land trusts (examples include Placer Land Trust, Ducks Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, American Farmland Trust) or other nonprofit entities on agricultural parcels should be considered as a means to mitigate for the permanent loss of agricultural land within the Sutter and Placer County region. The Agricultural Land Stewardship Program established by the California Farmland Conservancy, administered by the DLRP under the DOC, which is a grant program that aids in purchasing and/or partially funding agricultural easements, could also be applicable, as could agricultural easements administered by Placer County.

- The Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan known as the Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP) (described in Section 4.14.1.3 of the EIR) may be finalized and approved prior to corridor acquisition for the Parkway. The PCCP is being developed to guide and streamline permitting for large-scale development in Western Placer County over the next 50 years while establishing a network and conservation areas to protect and conserve sensitive species and natural communities. If and when approved, the PCCP is expected to set aside large tracts of contiguous land for conservation purposes. These properties would help to maintain the diversity of flora and fauna in the county, and in most (but not all) cases could help preserve farmland, as well, where proposed preserve areas would serve agricultural purposes as well as maintain a diversified plant and animal community. At this time, Sutter County does not have similar established criteria, or a program to review, execute, and administer agricultural easements. The Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan may provide a structure that would be suitable for such mitigation.

2.2.2 Significant Effect: Williamson Act Conversion. The Parkway would convert 240.26 acres of Williamson Act contracted lands. This would be a significant and unavoidable impact because it would be a conversion of more than 100 acres.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts described below support the finding that the impact of the Project cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- All build alternatives would impact Williamson Act contracted land. Among the Alternatives, the Project would impact the least amount of William Act contracted land.

- Even though in some instances Williamson Act properties affected by the Parkway may stay enrolled in the Williamson Act program, there are no feasible avoidance, minimization, mitigation, or design strategies that could be implemented to diminish potential impacts on Williamson Act enrolled lands.

2.2.3 Significant Effect: Conflicts with Agricultural Plans or Policies. Conflicts with agricultural plans or policies would be a significant and unavoidable impact.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- All build alternatives would conflict with agricultural plans or policies.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid farmland impacts and disruption of agricultural activities, which would be the primary cause of inconsistency with plans and policies in the study area. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR conceptual corridor alignments (see Section 2.5 of the EIR) and Tier 1 conceptual design modifications to maintain access to and viability of agricultural land. In order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the EIR). See also the discussion above. These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- Similar to conflicts with land use plans or policies, the only additional potential mitigation strategy would be to amend applicable plan policies related to

preservation of agricultural lands, which SPRTA has determined would not be feasible for the same reasons described in 2.1.3 above.

2.3 Visual and Aesthetics.

2.3.1 Significant Effect: Visual Character and Quality. The Parkway would change the visual character and quality of the study area, and increase viewer sensitivity and exposure. The Project would have potentially Moderate impacts, based on FHWA visual impact criteria. The combined visual affect of Placer Parkway and planned and potential development in and near the study area would change the visual character of the region. The area's shift from rural to urban/suburban will result in a cumulative visual impact.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- All build alternatives would have at least a moderate impact on aesthetics. The Project, along with alternative 4 would have a slightly lower impact than alternatives one through three.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid land use conversion impacts, which would also minimize visual impacts in the study area. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR corridor alignment alternatives (see Section 2.5 of the Draft EIR). Landscape concepts were identified in a collaborative effort, including biologists, landscape architects, and visual analysis experts to minimize visual effects of the Parkway. Other modifications were made to avoid or minimize impacts to a historic ranch complex, large vernal pool areas, wetlands, farmland, residences, the active portion of the City of Roseville Retention Basin and designated recreation areas in the West Roseville Specific Plan ("WRSP"), or to reduce the potential for growth inducement. In addition, several corridor alignment alternatives were developed in response to Technical Advisory Committee direction, including a corridor alignment paralleling Baseline Road, a shorter diagonal route through the Central Segment, and a segment north of and parallel to the Regional University Specific Plan area.

- In order to reduce environmental impacts, including visual impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the Draft EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made to avoid visual impacts. These efforts included:
  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to avoid inducing urban growth in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and to maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.
  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone subject to performance standards to be developed in Tier 2. The buffer zone would further the "parkway" concept by maintaining a visual open space concept and encouraging linkages to other open spaces along the corridor.

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on visual resources. Coordination will include development of specific design details for the Parkway and other projects as described below, to minimize impacts and cooperation between PCTPA and local jurisdictions with respect to potential impacts on other planned facilities.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- All visual mitigation strategies will be designed and implemented with the concurrence of the Caltrans District Landscape Architect, or as defined by FHWA.
- Parkway features and treatments will be designed to help complement the existing agricultural landscape within south Sutter and southwestern Placer counties where agricultural activities are projected to continue. In accordance with the FHWA and Caltrans requirements, the Caltrans District Landscape Architect will review all features and treatments before design completion.
- Landscaping concepts for Placer Parkway will respect the topography and vistas in the study area and complement the varying character of land adjacent to the Parkway corridor. Where wetlands adjoin the Parkway, designs shall use appropriate wetland species to the extent practicable. At the time of the Tier 2 environmental review, a Landscaping Conceptual Plan shall be developed for the Parkway, to be reviewed by the Caltrans District Landscape Architect (see the Visual Impact Assessment in the EIR for further details). Lighting elements will be approved for safety by Caltrans.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- In order to ensure compatibility with future planning efforts, it is assumed that local jurisdictions would also review the Visual Impact Assessment (URS, 2007h) for this EIR.

- Design of lighting elements would consider requirements of the Landscaping Conceptual Plan for minimizing potential aesthetic impacts (e.g., shielding lighting elements, using lower voltage lighting for planting areas, and proposing lighting fixtures that complement the visual character of the area).

2.4 Cultural Resources.

2.4.1 Significant Effect: Historic Resources (Built Environment). The Parkway could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource as defined in CEQA Guidelines §15064.5. Three properties warrant future formal evaluation as potentially representative examples of a type, period, or method of construction, or as works of a master. Reclamation District No. 1000 (RD 1000) is present in the study area, which is a National Register of Historical Places ("NRHP")–eligible and California Registry of Historic Resources ("CRHR")–eligible property. All build alternatives would impact this property. A determination of effect by the State Historic Preservation Officer has not been made at this Tier 1 stage. Potential cumulative impacts on historic built environment resources could occur as a result of acquisition of land and construction of any of the Parkway build alternatives in conjunction with other planned and proposed development within RD 1000. The Parkway would contribute to this cumulative impact.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- SPRTA has determined that this is a potentially significant and unavoidable impact of the Project, because no feasible route that meets the need and purpose of the Project has been identified that would not cross through RD 1000, and a determination of effect has not yet been made.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- Efforts to avoid potential impacts on archaeological resources were incorporated into the preliminary corridor alignment alternative selection process for Placer Parkway, as initial screening of archaeological records was used to develop corridor alignment alternatives routed to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to various resources, including historic and prehistoric archaeological sites.

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid impacts on historic, built environment resources. Initial screening of known locations of historic properties was used to develop corridor alignment alternatives routed to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to various resources including historic sites. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR corridor alignment alternatives (see Section 2.5 of the EIR), including modification of the proposed southern corridor alignment to avoid a historic ranch complex.

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- Where historic, built environment resources are identified that can not be avoided, consultation will be initiated with SHPO to identify potential strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate such impacts.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- Three properties in the study area (APN 35-260-011, APN 35-260-014, and APN 017-130-009 require further evaluation for NRHP and CRHR eligibility. Following this evaluation, if the Parkway is expected to result in adverse impacts on NRHP and CRHR properties, then efforts will be made to develop a roadway design within the chosen corridor that avoids or minimize impacts on these resources as far as possible. If impacts cannot be avoided by such measures, consultation will be initiated with SHPO to identify potential measures to mitigate such impacts.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Mitigation for impacts on historic, built environment resources could include relocation of historic resource, recordation and documentation according to the National Park Service's Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record standards, development of interpretive or educational exhibits, or development of an oral history project.

2.5 Traffic and Transportation.

2.5.1 Significant Effect: Traffic Pattern and Volumes and Level of Service Impacts. In 2020, the projected opening year of Placer Parkway, the Project would affect traffic patterns and volumes on arterial and collector roadways in a broad area covering south Sutter County, southwest Placer County, and north Sacramento County. While some roadway segments near proposed interchanges would have increases in traffic volumes due to Placer Parkway, a larger number of roadway segments would have decreases in traffic volumes.

In 2040, the Parkway, like all the build alternatives, would:

- Increase traffic volumes on some roadway segments near proposed interchanges along the Parkway.
- Result in decreases in traffic volumes on a larger number of local roadway segments southwestern Placer County and south Sutter County.

The Project, like all the build alternatives, would also increase traffic volumes and cause significant LOS impacts on:

State Route 70/99

SR 70/99 would operate at Level of Service (LOS) F conditions in 2040 between I-5 and Riego Road under the No-Build Alternative. The Project would add traffic to SR 70/99 from I-5 to the Parkway and thereby lengthen the period of time during the peak period where SR 70/99 would operate at LOS F conditions. This is also a cumulative impact of the Project.

The growth in traffic demand on SR 70/99 will stem from development over a wide area. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements in the SR 70/99 and SR 65 corridors. To adequately spread the cost of improvements on a fair-share basis, a mechanism, such as a multi-jurisdictional Joint Powers Authority that covers portions of Sutter, Placer, and Yuba counties, would need to be established to collect fees and plan, design, and construct improvements. Because it is not certain that these mitigation strategies would be implemented for some time, or at all, SPRTA has determined that this impact remains significant and unavoidable.

State Route 65

SR 65 would operate at LOS F conditions in 2040 between Interstate 80 (I-80) and the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass under the No-Build Alternative. All build alternatives (with and without a potential interchange on the Parkway at Watt Avenue) would add traffic to SR 65 from Placer Parkway and the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass and thereby lengthen the period of time during the peak period where SR 65 would operate at LOS F conditions. This is also a cumulative impact of the Project.

Other Arterials

In 2040, Placer Parkway would add traffic to the following roadways and cause a significant impact on the Level of Service on various segments as listed below:

- Fiddyment Road – north of future Blue Oaks Boulevard.
- Whitney Ranch Parkway – between SR 65 and University Avenue.
- Valley View Parkway – in the proposed Clover Valley area of Rocklin.
- Sierra College Boulevard – between future Valley View Parkway (in the proposed Clover Valley area of Rocklin) and English Colony Way.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1, 2 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- The Project, like all build alternatives, would result in similar but smaller changes in travel patterns in the Transportation Analysis Study Area (TASA) under Existing Plus Project conditions.
- Under all build alternatives, Placer Parkway would add traffic to SR 70/99 between Interstate 5 (I-5) and Elkhorn Boulevard and would cause a significant impact on the level of service of this freeway segment.
- Under all build alternatives, Placer Parkway would add traffic to SR 65 between Placer Parkway and the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass and would cause a significant impact on the level of service of this freeway segment.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the Draft EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.
- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to eliminate alternatives that did not achieve the Project Purpose and Need (see Chapter 1 of the Draft EIR) and/or safety requirements. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR corridor alignment alternatives (see Section 2.5 of the Draft EIR). These efforts included elimination and/or modification of alternatives and/or Project components that resulted in increased

travel times that substantially reduced the Parkways benefits, those which would not attract sufficient traffic to generate substantial congestion reduction, and those which did not meet Caltrans safety standards.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts have been made to avoid impacts on traffic. These efforts include:
  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to provide a high-speed, free-flowing facility, avoid inducing urban growth and associated traffic in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.
  - The provision of access at the western and eastern ends of the Parkway, where existing areas of dense development are already located or planned and future congestion is anticipated.
  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone, including the provision of additional future interchanges which would affect the long-term reliable travel time reductions provided by the Parkway subject to performance standards to be developed in Tier 2.
- During the Tier 1 environmental review process, PCTPA worked with local jurisdictions to plan for the Parkway and other proposed development in order to reduce the likelihood of impacts on the local and regional roadway system. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To maintain existing and future local roadway connectivity (for emergency access, farming operations and community access), which will contribute to mitigation of traffic impacts, over-crossings will be constructed, as appropriate, to convey traffic over the Parkway. These over-crossings will not connect to the Parkway.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- The following strategies (individually or in combinations) could reduce the Parkway's impacts on SR 70/99 by decreasing the length of time spent in LOS F conditions during the morning and evening peak periods:
  - Add HOV lanes to SR 70/99 between Placer Parkway and I-5.
  - Construct a controlled-access roadway parallel to SR 70/99 between Riego Road and Elkhorn Boulevard. The roadway could carry short- to medium-

range trips between future growth areas in southern Sutter County and northern Sacramento County that would otherwise use SR 70/99.

- Provide substantial transit services in the SR 70/99 corridor, including express bus services during commute periods and frequent all-day services from urban areas of Sutter and southwest Placer counties to the Natomas area and downtown Sacramento.

- Identify "fair-share" contributions for new development in portions of Placer, Sutter, and Yuba counties that would contribute traffic to SR 70/99 to help fund improvements to SR 70/99.

The growth in traffic demand on SR 70/99 will stem from development over a wide area. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements in the SR 70/99 corridor. To adequately spread the cost of improvements on a fair-share basis, a mechanism such as a multijurisdictional Joint Powers Authority that covers portions of Placer, Sutter, and Yuba counties, would need to be established to collect fees and plan, design, and construct improvements.

- Several strategies were identified that by themselves or in combination could mitigate the LOS impacts on SR 65. These are as follows:

  - Widen SR 65 to six lanes between Placer Parkway and the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass by 2020.

  - Provide additional north-south capacity on local roadways parallel to SR 65.

  - Provide substantial transit services in the SR 65 Corridor.

  - Identify fair-share contributions for new development that would contribute traffic to SR 65 to help fund improvements to SR 65.

  The growth in traffic demand on SR 65 will stem from development over a wide area. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements in the SR 65 corridor. SPRTA adopted the Regional Transportation and Air Quality Mitigation fee, which assesses new development for impacts on specified regional transportation facilities. One of these projects is to widen SR 65 between I-80 and Twelve Bridges Drive. In 2009, Placer County and the cities of Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville adopted a Tier II MOA fee program, which includes $480 million to fund the Placer Parkway. This funding will include improvements for the SR 65/Parkway/Whitney Ranch Parkway interchange and contribute $5 million to the improvement to improve the I-80/SR 65 interchange.

- The following strategies were identified to mitigate the LOS impacts on Fiddyment Road:

- Provide adequate lanes at the Fiddyment Road/Blue Oaks Boulevard and Fiddyment Road/North Hayden Parkway intersections.
- Widen Fiddyment Road to six lanes between Blue Oaks Boulevard and the Roseville City limits.
- Construct an interchange on Placer Parkway at Watt Avenue.
- Identify fair-share contributions for new development that would contribute traffic to Fiddyment Road to help fund improvements to Fiddyment Road.

Based on discussions with the City of Roseville, the segment of Fiddyment Road between Blue Oaks Boulevard and the Roseville city limits was assumed to have four lanes under all scenarios. A segment-based analysis suggests a widening of this segment to six lanes to mitigate the LOS impact. However, Roseville's LOS policy focuses on the operations of signalized intersections during the p.m. peak hour at buildout of the City's entitled land uses. Construction of adequate turn lanes at the intersections of Fiddyment Road/Blue Oaks Boulevard and Fiddyment Road/North Hayden Parkway may provide LOS C conditions without the need for a widening of this segment to six lanes.

Since this segment of Fiddyment Road would not have a significant LOS impact if an interchange is constructed on Placer Parkway, this interchange could be considered as a mitigation measure.

The growth in traffic demand on Fiddyment Road will stem from development over portions of Roseville, Lincoln, and unincorporated Placer County. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements to Fiddyment Road. To adequately spread the cost of improvements on a fair-share basis, a mechanism such as a multijurisdictional Joint Powers Authority that covers portions of several jurisdictions, would need to be established. Placer County and the City of Roseville have established a Joint Powers Authority that covers portions of those jurisdictions to fund certain roadway improvements in west Placer County, including Fiddyment Road and Walerga Road.

- The following strategies were identified to mitigate the LOS impacts on this segment of Whitney Ranch Parkway:
  - Widen Whitney Ranch Parkway to eight lanes west of University Avenue.
  - Identify fair-share contributions for new development that would contribute traffic to Whitney Ranch Parkway to help fund improvements to Whitney Ranch Parkway.

The growth in traffic demand on Whitney Ranch Parkway will stem from development in portions of the cities of Rocklin and Lincoln as well as

unincorporated Placer County. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements to Whitney Ranch Parkway. The City of Rocklin has development fees for roadway improvements. SPRTA adopted the Regional Transportation and Air Quality Mitigation fee, which assesses new development for impacts on specified regional transportation facilities. One of these projects is to widen SR 65 between I-80 and Twelve Bridges Drive. In 2009, Placer County and the cities of Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville adopted a Tier II MOA fee program which includes $480 million to fund the Placer Parkway. This funding will include improvements for the SR 65/Parkway/Whitney Ranch Parkway interchange and contribute $5 million to the improvement to improve the I-80/SR 65 interchange.

- The following strategies were identified to mitigate the LOS impacts on Valley View Parkway:

  - Provide adequate turn lanes at the Valley View Parkway/Sierra College Boulevard and Valley View Parkway/Park Drive intersections.

  - Widen Valley View Parkway to four lanes.

  - Identify "fair share" contributions for new development that would contribute traffic to Valley View Parkway to help fund improvements to Valley View Parkway.

  Based on input from the City of Rocklin, Valley View Parkway through the Clover Valley area of Rocklin was assumed to have two lanes under all scenarios. A segment-based analysis suggests a widening of this segment to four lanes to mitigate the LOS impact. However, the intersections along Valley View Parkway/Sierra College Boulevard would have relatively low traffic volumes on its cross streets. Due to those conditions, the daily capacity of this segment may be greater than those used for the analysis in the Draft EIR. Construction of adequate turn lanes at the intersections of Valley View Parkway/Sierra College Boulevard and Valley View Parkway/Park Drive may provide LOS C conditions without the need for a widening of this segment to four lanes. The details of such intersection improvements and the resulting levels of service would be determined in a subsequent Tier 2 EIS/EIR.

  The growth in traffic demand on Valley View Parkway will stem from development in portions of Rocklin and unincorporated Placer County. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements to Valley View Parkway. The City of Rocklin has development fees for roadway improvements. As noted previously, SPRTA has adopted the Regional Transportation and Air Quality Mitigation Fee.

- The following strategies were identified to mitigate the LOS impacts on Sierra College Boulevard:

- Provide adequate turn lanes at the Sierra College Boulevard/Valley View Parkway and Sierra College Boulevard/English Colony Way intersections.

- Widen Sierra College Boulevard to six lanes between Valley View Parkway and English Colony Way.

- Identify fair-share contributions for new development that would contribute traffic to Sierra College Boulevard to help fund improvements to Sierra College Boulevard.

The segment of Sierra College Boulevard between Valley View Parkway and English Colony Way was assumed to have four lanes under all scenarios. A segment-based analysis suggests a widening of this segment to six lanes. However, the intersections along Sierra College Boulevard are T intersections, with relatively low traffic volumes on its cross streets. Due to those conditions, the daily capacity of this segment may be greater than those used for this analysis. Construction of adequate turn lanes at the intersections of Sierra College Boulevard/Valley View Parkway and Sierra College Boulevard/English Colony Way may provide LOS C conditions without the need for a widening of this segment to six lanes.

The growth in traffic demand on Sierra College Boulevard will stem from development over a wide area. Traffic impact fees on this new development are a potential source of funding for improvements to Sierra College Boulevard. The SPRTA currently collects traffic impact fees for various improvements to regional roadways in south Placer County, including widening this section of Sierra College Boulevard to four lanes. Additional improvements to this section of Sierra College Boulevard could be incorporated into the SPRTA fees.

- The Project would result in a less than desirable radius in one location (near the intersection of the planned extensions of Watt Avenue and Blue Oaks Boulevard) if the ultimate design places Placer Parkway along the northerly side (or inside) of the corridor alignment's curve. If the Parkway is located on the northerly side of the 1,000-foot-wide corridor, the actual centerline radius of the Parkway would be approximately 1,000 feet less than the desired design standard and 700 feet less than the Caltrans' recommended minimum radius for urban freeways. To avoid an impact on the Project's design standards, the Parkway should be located along the southerly side (outside) of the corridor alignment's curve in this location.

2.6 Air Quality.

2.6.1 Significant Effect: Construction Air Quality.

Construction air quality impacts would be significant because construction emissions would exceed the Placer County Air Pollution Control District (PCAPCD) and the Feather River Air Quality Management District's (FRAQMD) construction emissions thresholds

for reactive organic gases (ROG), oxides of nitrogen (NO_X), and particulate matter less than or equal to 10 microns (PM_{10}).

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- No open burning of removed vegetation will be allowed during infrastructure improvements. Vegetative material will be chipped and delivered to waste to energy facilities, or to an appropriate disposal site.

- A dust control plan will be prepared and implemented, and will address the minimum Administrative Requirements found in Regulation 3.16, *Fugitive Dust Emissions* (FRAQMD, 2006d) and Section 400 of *District Rule 228, Fugitive Dust* (PCAPCD, 2006b). Additional details of dust control strategies are provided in the Placer Parkway Air Quality Technical Memorandum. Dust control strategies will include using appropriate measures to prevent dust and dirt from contaminating offsite areas and controlling dust to prevent air quality and water contamination from inactive construction areas.

- Prior to construction, the contractor will be required to provide FRAQMD and PCAPCD with a comprehensive inventory of construction equipment and anticipated construction timeline.

- Construction equipment and vehicles will be maintained so that exhaust emissions shall not exceed *District Rule 202 Visible Emission* limitations. Operators of vehicles and equipment found to exceed opacity limits are to be immediately notified and the equipment must be repaired within 72 hours. An Applicant representative that is CARB-certified to perform VEE shall routinely evaluate Project-related off-road and heavy-duty on-road equipment emissions for compliance with this requirement.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Idling time for diesel-power equipment will be minimized to 5 minutes or less for all diesel-power equipment.

- Where possible, alternative power sources (e.g. power poles) and fuel will be used to operate equipment instead of using diesel-powered equipment. If existing sources are not available, low sulfur fuel will be used for diesel power generators.

- Where possible, alternative fuel such as aqueous or emulsified diesel fuel will be used for all equipment to reduce NO_x and diesel exhaust emissions.

- Construction will comply with all relevant California Air Pollution Control District rules and policies, and all grading codes and construction air quality policies designated to limit idling and construction equipment emissions, including some precursor emission controls, preparation of diesel emission reduction plans, requirements for use of CARB-certified equipment for post combustion controls, and compliance with state construction vehicle emission standards, etc.

Even with these mitigation strategies, SPRTA has determined that impacts could remain significant and unavoidable during construction because it cannot be certain that construction air quality impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

2.6.2 <u>Significant Effect: Operational Air Quality</u>. The Project would exceed the FRAQMD significance thresholds for ROG and NO_X and the PCAPCD significance threshold for CO and NO_X. Although these overall levels of increase in pollutants are negligible (between 1.8 and 2.6 percent, depending on the pollutant), they would also contribute to cumulative air quality impacts.

<u>Findings</u>. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

<u>Facts in Support of Findings</u>. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- The impact conclusions are tempered by the following: (1) as fuel and vehicle technology improves over the next decade, vehicle emissions increases can be expected to be lower than the Projections presented in this analysis; (2) a reduction in traffic congestion would increase travel speed, which would reduce overall vehicle exhaust emissions (i.e., vehicle emissions are linearly correlated with travel speed); and (3) historical and current studies and testing of vehicles traveling below 65 mph show that lower travel speed (5 to 15 mph) results in emission of greater quantities of pollutants than vehicles traveling at higher speed; Placer Parkway would reduce vehicle hours of delay within the TASA and Analysis Focus Area (AFA), and would alleviate traffic congestion, reduce travel time, and increase average travel speed, resulting in reduced emissions. While a detailed analysis of these factors would not occur until Tier 2, they are likely to reduce air quality impacts identified in this Tier 1 EIS/EIR.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, avoidance alternatives were considered to reduce environmental impacts (see Section 2.5.4 of the EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to eliminate alternatives that did not achieve the Project Purpose and Need (see Chapter 1, Introduction). Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR conceptual corridor alignments and/or Project components that resulted in increased travel times that substantially reduced the Parkways' benefits, and those which would not attract sufficient traffic to the Parkway to generate substantial congestion reduction in the system-wide traffic network. Additional details of alternatives and alternative components are provided in Section 2.5 of the Draft EIR.

- During early conceptual planning and development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made to avoid adverse impacts on traffic patterns, which would also contribute to reduction of potential air quality impacts. These efforts included:

  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to provide a high-speed, free-flowing facility, avoid inducing urban growth and associated traffic in areas not designed for development in existing general plans and maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.

  - The provision of access at the western and eastern ends of the Parkway, where existing areas of dense development are already located or planned and future congestion is anticipated.

  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone that, depending on its final width, would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone, including the provision of additional future interchanges which would affect the long-term reliable travel time reductions provided by the Parkway.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of air quality impacts. Coordination will include development of a construction air quality plan to minimize construction impacts as described below, and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed development in the study area.

- During Tier 2, the Project Proponent will consult with FRAQMD and PCAPCD regarding the need for preparation of a screening level or detailed health risk assessment.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- If it is not possible to maintain a distance of 500 feet or more between the edge of the Parkway and any sensitive air receptors (see Section 4.9.3.4), then FRAQMD and PCAPCD will be consulted to determine the need for a health risk assessment. If a health risk assessment is performed and risks exceed the accepted standards, mitigation will be implemented as appropriate to reduce risks to an acceptable level, and will include consideration of relocations if necessary.

- Environmental reports prepared for proposed development projects, such as specific and community plans, that are in close proximity to the Parkway (i.e., 500 feet or less) will be reviewed. As appropriate, the Project Proponent will request, via comments on such documents, that potential detrimental health risks posed to individuals living near the corridor are considered, and that local jurisdictions add policies to their development review process or general plans that require assessment of air toxics for projects within 500 feet of the Parkway. The Project Proponent will also request that, before a city, county, special district or school district approves a project that would place sensitive receptors (e.g., children, the elderly, and hospitals) within 500 feet of the selected corridor, an analysis of potential air toxic contaminants be conducted to determine whether mitigation strategies are needed as part of the proposed use, or if the location is not appropriate for such a use. This supplemental analysis would provide information regarding the potential health risks to exposed individuals. Since Placer Parkway would like be constructed within a 500- to 1,000-foot-wide corridor, unless the size of the buffer is adjusted as described in Section 2.2.4.1 at the bottom of page 2-9, development projects could be at least 500 feet from the roadway, depending on the location of the roadway within the corridor, in which case it is possible that no additional assessment would be required.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- During Tier 2 design, considerations will be given to aligning the Parkway within the selected corridor to maximize the distance between the roadway's edge and any sensitive air receptors (see Section 4.9.3.4 of the EIR).

- Within Tier 2 design, consideration will be given to the strategic placement of trees near roadways (in accordance with FHWA and Caltrans guidance) to enhance pollutant dispersal and provide shading to reduce diurnal hydrocarbon emissions.

2.7 Noise.

2.7.1 Significant Effect: Operational Noise Levels. The Parkway could result in exceedances of noise standards set by FHWA and Caltrans. The Parkway could also result in exceedances of noise thresholds as specified in the Sutter and Placer County General Plans. This would be a significant impact and a cumulative impact.

The Parkway would result in a permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the study area above existing ambient noise levels. Several roadways would experience a 3 dB or greater increase in noise relative to existing (2004) levels attributable to higher traffic volumes. One roadway segment in the noise study area would experience relative noise increases of more than 12 dBA with the Project. This location is at 18th Street, north of Elverta Road (location #107, as shown on Table 4.10-5 of the EIR). This would be a significant impact.

Since the future adjacent land uses in the area where the Parkway would be constructed are in flux, with many projects in the planning stage, it is not known whether the jurisdictional mitigation strategy would be implemented or if the other strategies listed below would be completely effective in all locations. Therefore, SPRTA has determined that this impact remains significant and unavoidable.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance based on current information. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the Parkway alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid impacts on communities, which would also reduce the potential for noise impacts. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of Project Study Report corridor alignment alternatives to avoid community impacts.

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered. These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts have been made to avoid socioeconomic and community impacts, which would also contribute to reduction in future potential noise impacts.

- The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to avoid inducing urban growth in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and to maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.

- The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone.

- During the Tier 1 environmental review process, PCTPA worked with local jurisdictions to plan for the Parkway and proposed development in order to reduce the likelihood of environmental impacts, including noise. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments to avoid community impacts, which would also reduce noise impacts.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of noise impacts. Coordination will include development of specific Parkway design details to minimize impacts, such as the roadway footprint within the adopted corridor, landscaping features to provide noise attenuation, and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed development in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- The Project Proponent will request that jurisdictions require that applicants for development proposals that may be affected by traffic patterns associated with the Parkway perform a noise impact study as part of their environmental review process, using the projected traffic volumes in the Parkway traffic report (DKS Associates, 2007) to assess the potential for exceedances of the land use compatibility noise thresholds identified in their general plans. The Project Proponent will recommend that jurisdictions should work to avoid such exceedances in their planning processes so as to avoid costly mitigation in the future

- To minimize construction noise, the following construction noise control strategies will be required to be implemented by the contractor:

  - Minimize nighttime and weekend work.

  - Use portable noise screens to provide shielding for jack hammering or other similar activities when work is close to the hotels.

  - Compliance with Caltrans' Standard Specifications 7-1.011 (July 1999) "*Sound Control Requirements.*" The contractor shall comply with all local sound control and noise level rules, regulations, and ordinances that

apply to any work performed pursuant to the contract. Each internal combustion engine, used for any purpose on the job or related to the job, should be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine should be operated without said muffler.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Potential noise abatement strategies identified in the Caltrans policy (Caltrans, 1998a) include the following:
  - Avoiding the project impact by using design alternatives, such as altering the horizontal and vertical alignment of the Parkway.
  - Constructing noise barriers.
  - Acquiring property to serve as a buffer zone.
  - Using traffic management strategies to regulate types of vehicles and speeds.
  - Acoustically insulating public use or nonprofit institutional structures.
- The Project Proponent would consider the use of noise barriers to abate noise impacts on sensitive receptors. The reasonableness of this noise mitigation strategy and the criteria for determining it would be guided by Caltrans policy.

2.8 Biological Resources.

2.8.1 Significant Effects: Endangered, Threatened, Candidate, and Fully Protected Species and Their Habitat. Direct effects on special-status species are summarized below.

- White-tailed kite and Swainson's hawk – loss of trees for nesting (3.6 acres of potential nesting habitat potentially removed), loss of agricultural and grassland foraging habitat, (759.4 acres of potential habitat).
- Giant garter snake – no documented occurrences, but wetland and riparian areas could provide habitat for the snake (268.2 acres potential habitat).
- Vernal pool species – direct and indirect loss of habitat (124 acres) may impact species (see Section 2.8.2 of these findings).
- Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle – the host plant of the beetle is uncommon in the study area, but impacts to 1.2 acres of beetle habitat would include the direct loss of the host plant, elderberry shrubs, which would be removed as a result of construction of the Parkway.

Secondary and Indirect Impacts include loss or degradation of habitat; changes in the value of habitat due to noise and lighting; vehicle strikes; habitat fragmentation, and; reduction in wildlife corridors and barriers to wildlife dispersal.

The impacts listed above will also result in an incremental contribution to cumulative impacts related to loss of habitat and natural communities, habitat fragmentation, adverse effects related to increased proximity to urban land uses,

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- The Project has the least potential among the alternatives for secondary and indirect impacts on biological resources, including the lowest potential for habitat fragmentation.
- The Project is the alternative most consistent with the regional habitat conservation plan (Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP)) being developed by Placer County.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered. These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.
- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid biological resources impacts. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR corridor alignment alternatives. These efforts included;
  - For connections at Whitney Ranch Parkway, the central and southern alignments were rerouted to the north to avoid a large vernal pool complex that is located immediately northeast of the WRSP area.
  - The central corridor alignment was modified to minimizing encroachment into a large wetland/vernal pool/conservation area at the confluence of two main branches of Curry Creek in the Central Segment. All central corridor alignments were modified to avoid this area and reduce habitat fragmentation and impacts to special-status species, wetlands, vernal pools, and a large conservation area by adjusting the alignment in the Western Segment to avoid the Pleasant Grove/Sankey community and a designated conservation area.

- Modification of the southern corridor alignment to avoid large vernal pool areas and areas of manmade waters of the United States.

- A Sunset Boulevard connection at SR 65 was eliminated due to potential impacts on existing businesses and large vernal pool complexes.

- A portion of a central corridor alignment that encroached into a large wetland/vernal pool/conservation area at the confluence of two main branches of Curry Creek was eliminated and the alignment moved northward. Adjustments were made to southern corridor alignments to reflect different distances between it and Riego/Baseline Road and reduce habitat fragmentation by placing the two roadways next to each other. Based on substantive vernal pool impacts, impacts to a residential community in the vicinity of County Acres, and input from jurisdictions that this was not perceived as good infrastructure planning by the Technical Advisory Committee, this alternative was eliminated.

- Landowner-identified alignments 1N and 2N (see Section 2.5.5 of the EIR) were eliminated from further consideration, in response to substantial federal and state resource agency concerns regarding alignments north of Pleasant Grove Creek, because of substantially more impacts to aquatic resources.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made which directly or indirectly help to avoid impacts on biological resources. These efforts included:

  - The use of bridges to span floodplains. Culverts would be used at smaller creek crossings as appropriate, depending on local conditions and permit requirements. The Pleasant Grove Creek floodplain would be crossed by 1,600-foot-long multi-span bridges (one in each direction) supported by abutments located approximately 800 feet on either side of the creek to avoid the riparian habitat associated with the creek. Bridge spans would be a maximum of 150 feet and would be supported by columns located outside of the ordinary high water level.

  - Roadway elevation within the 100-year floodplain such that the bottom of any new bridges would be above the 100-year water surface elevation. The roadway support structures and bridges would be designed to minimize environmental impact and not impede stream and flood flows.

  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road. This would avoid inducing urban growth in the agricultural areas not designated for development in existing general plans, and maintain the rural character of south Sutter and western Placer counties.

  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway

and limit future development in the buffer zone. This would provide opportunities to preserve biological resources along the corridor

- A commitment to the use of native plant species, where appropriate, in line with Caltrans policy.

- During the environmental review process, the Placer County Transportation Agency (PCTPA) worked with local jurisdictions to plan for the Parkway and other proposed development in order to reduce the likelihood of impacts on biological resources. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent would continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on biological resources. Coordination would include development of specific Project design details to minimize impacts as described below, and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed developments in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- Mitigation Strategy under the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP): Mitigation strategy for the Natomas Basin area will include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. To meet the mitigation goals of the NBHCP, a mitigation fee is paid to the NBHCP by developers of projects when they apply for building permits. The NBHCP then uses the mitigation fees to acquire, restore, and manage mitigation lands to provide habitat for protected species and maintain agriculture in the basin (NBC, 2006). The required fees will be paid to the NBHCP to mitigate for Parkway impacts to special-status species in the NBHCP service area.

- For Project components outside of the area permitted for development under the NBHCP, negotiations with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be undertaken to amend the NBHCP or provide such other compensation as would meet the intent of the NBHCP with respect to protection of special-status species in the NBHCP service area.

- Tier 2 design would implement the following strategies to reduce potential impacts on biological resources:

  - Avoidance or minimization of stream crossings.

  - Alignment of the roadway within the corridor to avoid sensitive resources, and provision of buffer zones, including provision of sufficient setback distances in accordance with Caltrans and county requirements between the highway right-of-way and wetlands or riparian areas.

- A site-specific assessment of this impact would be implemented during the Tier 2 evaluation when the actual limits of the Parkway are defined. Where feasible the Parkway will be designed to minimize adverse impacts to the size, quality, or connectivity of adjacent vernal pool complexes by maintaining appropriate setbacks for ground-disturbing impacts, constructing culverts and drainage features for the future roadway to minimize changes to the natural hydrology or degradation of water quality in adjacent wetlands. If indirect effects cannot be substantially avoided or minimized, the Project proponent would implement mitigation consistent with the strategies described below.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- The following presents a summary of mitigation strategies that could be applicable to biological resource impacts. Additional details are provided in the Placer Parkway Natural Environmental Study.

  - Mitigation strategy for impacts to areas within Sutter County but not in the Natomas Basin: This would include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. Strategies to avoid and minimize potential impacts would include scheduling construction activities to minimize disturbance during sensitive life cycle phases of wildlife species; monitoring construction activities to limit disturbance, vegetation removal, and habitat damage; and implementing an environmental awareness training program for all construction personnel. In keeping with the strategy presented in *Eco-Logical* (Brown, 2006), compensation would include some combination of habitat preservation, restoration, and creation developed in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies with the goal of protecting larger, connected habitat rather than protecting fragmented areas of a single resource.

  - Mitigation for impacts to vernal pool species would be consistent with the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon. Existing USFWS and CDFG mitigation guidelines for giant garter snake, Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and Swainson's hawks would be used.

  - Mitigation strategy under the proposed Placer County Conservation Plan (PCCP): The PCCP is currently under development and the timing of its completion is uncertain, but one of its goals to use regional opportunities to build on existing or planned conservation efforts. The conceptual mitigation for Placer Parkway is consistent with the goals of the PCCP, and may use (if available) its established mechanisms for conservation. At the same time, conceptual mitigation for Placer Parkway must provide for suitable alternatives should the PCCP not be functional in time to serve this Project's mitigation needs.

Under either scenario, the avoidance and minimization of impacts is the preferred strategy for Placer Parkway, as identified in *Eco-Logical* guidance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (Brown, 2006). Consistent with the *Eco-Logical* strategy, required mitigation will be implemented so that it would complement and expand existing conservation and open space areas in the Parkway vicinity. A number of opportunities for restoration and conservation are identified in the draft Ecosystem Restoration Plan for the Pleasant Grove Creek and Curry Creek watersheds (Foothill Associates, 2005).

If the PCCP is approved, it would likely require mitigation based on acres of undeveloped lands that are developed rather than on a habitat-specific basis. Two options to compensate for Parkway impacts are under consideration: in-lieu fee payment, or acquisition of conservation lands. Both of these options would provide conservation of larger, consolidated areas of land that are consistent with the *Eco-Logical* approach advocated by Brown (2006).

- Mitigation strategy for impacts in the absence of the PCCP: This mitigation strategy would be based upon the mitigation guidelines presented in *Eco-Logical* (Brown, 2006). This strategy would include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. Compensation would include some combination of habitat preservation, restoration, and creation developed in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies. Compensation areas would be selected based on several criteria reflecting habitat value and regulatory and planning parameters. Compensatory habitat mitigation in the absence of the PCCP would be implemented according to the strategies outlined for Placer County in the Natural Environment Study.

2.8.2 <u>Significant Effects: Vernal Pool and Wetland Species</u>. Vernal pool fairy shrimp, vernal pool tadpole shrimp, and Boggs Lake hedge hyssop are all vernal pool–dependant species, and the Project would directly impact 124 acres of this habitat. The mitigation strategy for vernal pool dependent species would be directed by principles set by the Placer County Conservation Plan (if implemented), *Eco-logical* (Brown, 2006) and/or the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon (USFWS, 2005), which could include avoidance, minimization, or mitigation through in-lieu fee payment or acquisition of conservation lands. Implementation of the mitigation strategy would substantially lessen the impact of the loss of vernal pool habitat potentially utilized by these species; however, the impact would remain significant after mitigation. To the extent that replacement, re-creation or restoration of vernal pools can be implemented, this impact would be reduced; however, because the mitigation measure does not guarantee replacement of the affected habitat, this impact would remain significant.

<u>Findings</u>. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered. These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid biological resources impacts. Examples of such efforts included modification and/or elimination of PSR corridor alignment alternatives. These efforts included;

  - For connections at Whitney Ranch Parkway, the central and southern alignments were rerouted to the north to avoid a large vernal pool complex that is located immediately northeast of the WRSP area.

  - The central corridor alignment was modified to minimizing encroachment into a large wetland/vernal pool/conservation area at the confluence of two main branches of Curry Creek in the Central Segment. All central corridor alignments were modified to avoid this area and reduce habitat fragmentation and impacts to special-status species, wetlands, vernal pools, and a large conservation area by adjusting the alignment in the Western Segment to avoid the Pleasant Grove/ Sankey community and a designated conservation area.

  - Modification of the southern corridor alignment to avoid large vernal pool areas and areas of manmade waters of the United States.

  - A Sunset Boulevard connection at SR 65 was eliminated due to potential impacts on existing businesses and large vernal pool complexes.

  - A portion of a central corridor alignment that encroached into a large wetland/vernal pool/conservation area at the confluence of two main branches of Curry Creek was eliminated and the alignment moved northward. Adjustments were made to southern corridor alignments to reflect different distances between it and Riego/Baseline Road and reduce habitat fragmentation by placing the two roadways next to each other. Based on substantive vernal pool impacts, impacts to a residential community in the vicinity of County Acres, and input from jurisdictions that this was not perceived as good infrastructure planning by the Technical Advisory Committee, this alternative was eliminated.

- Landowner-identified alignments 1N and 2N were eliminated from further consideration, in response to substantial federal and state resource agency concerns regarding alignments north of Pleasant Grove Creek, because of substantially more impacts to aquatic resources.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made which directly or indirectly help to avoid impacts on biological resources. These efforts included:

  - The use of bridges to span floodplains. Culverts would be used at smaller creek crossings as appropriate, depending on local conditions and permit requirements. The Pleasant Grove Creek floodplain would be crossed by 1,600-foot-long multi-span bridges (one in each direction) supported by abutments located approximately 800 feet on either side of the creek to avoid the riparian habitat associated with the creek. Bridge spans would be a maximum of 150 feet and would be supported by columns located outside of the ordinary high water level.

  - Roadway elevation within the 100-year floodplain such that the bottom of any new bridges would be above the 100-year water surface elevation. The roadway support structures and bridges would be designed to minimize environmental impact and not impede stream and flood flows.

  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road. This would avoid inducing urban growth in the agricultural areas not designated for development in existing general plans, and maintain the rural character of south Sutter and western Placer counties.

  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone. This would provide opportunities to preserve biological resources along the corridor

  - A commitment to the use of native plant species, where appropriate, in line with Caltrans policy.

- During the Tier 1 environmental review process, the Placer County Transportation Agency (PCTPA) worked with local jurisdictions to plan for the Parkway and other proposed development in order to reduce the likelihood of impacts on biological resources. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent would continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on biological resources. Coordination would include development of specific design details to minimize impacts as

described below, and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed developments in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- Mitigation Strategy under the NBHCP: Mitigation strategy for the Natomas Basin area will include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. To meet the mitigation goals of the NBHCP, a mitigation fee is paid to the NBHCP by developers of projects when they apply for building permits. The NBHCP then uses the mitigation fees to acquire, restore, and manage mitigation lands to provide habitat for protected species and maintain agriculture in the basin (NBC, 2006). The required fees will be paid to the NBHCP to mitigate for Parkway impacts to special-status species in the NBHCP service area.

- For Parkway components outside of the area permitted for development under the NBHCP, negotiations with the USFWS will be undertaken to amend the NBHCP or provide such other compensation as would meet the intent of the NBHCP with respect to protection of special-status species in the NBHCP service area.

- Tier 2 design would implement the following strategies to reduce potential impacts on biological resources:

  - Avoidance or minimization of stream crossings.

  - Alignment of the roadway within the corridor to avoid sensitive resources, and provision of buffer zones, including provision of sufficient setback distances in accordance with Caltrans and county requirements between the highway right-of-way and wetlands or riparian areas.

  - A site-specific assessment of this impact would be implemented during the Tier 2 evaluation when the actual limits of the Parkway are defined. Where feasible the project will be designed to minimize adverse impacts to the size, quality, or connectivity of adjacent vernal pool complexes by maintaining appropriate setbacks for ground-disturbing impacts, constructing culverts and drainage features for the future roadway to minimize changes to the natural hydrology or degradation of water quality in adjacent wetlands. If indirect effects cannot be substantially avoided or minimized, the project proponent would implement mitigation consistent with the strategies described in Section 4.14.4.4 (Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations) below.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- The following presents a summary of mitigation strategies that could be applicable to biological resource impacts. Additional details are provided in the Placer Parkway Natural Environmental Study.

- Mitigation strategy for impacts to areas within Sutter County but not in the Natomas Basin: This would include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. Strategies to avoid and minimize potential impacts would include scheduling construction activities to minimize disturbance during sensitive life cycle phases of wildlife species; monitoring construction activities to limit disturbance, vegetation removal, and habitat damage; and implementing an environmental awareness training program for all construction personnel. In keeping with the strategy presented in *Eco-Logical* (Brown, 2006), compensation would include some combination of habitat preservation, restoration, and creation developed in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies with the goal of protecting larger, connected habitat rather than protecting fragmented areas of a single resource.

- Mitigation for impacts to vernal pool species would be consistent with the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon. Existing USFWS and CDFG mitigation guidelines for giant garter snake, Valley elderberry longhorn beetle, and Swainson's hawks would be used.

- Mitigation strategy under the proposed PCCP: The PCCP is currently under development and the timing of its completion is uncertain, but one of its goals to use regional opportunities to build on existing or planned conservation efforts. The conceptual mitigation for Placer Parkway is consistent with the goals of the PCCP, and may use (if available) its established mechanisms for conservation. At the same time, conceptual mitigation for Placer Parkway must provide for suitable alternatives should the PCCP not be functional in time to serve this Project's mitigation needs.

Under either scenario, the avoidance and minimization of impacts is the preferred strategy for Placer Parkway, as identified in *Eco-Logical* guidance from the U.S. Department of Transportation (Brown, 2006). Consistent with the *Eco-Logical* strategy, required mitigation will be implemented so that it would complement and expand existing conservation and open space areas in the Parkway vicinity. A number of opportunities for restoration and conservation are identified in the draft Ecosystem Restoration Plan for the Pleasant Grove Creek and Curry Creek watersheds (Foothill Associates, 2005).

If the PCCP is approved, it would likely require mitigation based on acres of undeveloped lands that are developed rather than on a habitat-specific basis. Two options to compensate for Parkway impacts are under consideration: in-lieu fee payment, or acquisition of conservation lands. Both of these options would provide conservation of larger, consolidated areas of land that are consistent with the *Eco-Logical* approach advocated by Brown (2006).

- Mitigation strategy for impacts in the absence of the PCCP: This mitigation strategy would be based upon the mitigation guidelines presented in *Eco-Logical* (Brown, 2006). This strategy would include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. Compensation would include some combination of habitat preservation, restoration, and creation developed in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies. Compensation areas would be selected based on several criteria reflecting habitat value and regulatory and planning parameters. Compensatory habitat mitigation in the absence of the PCCP would be implemented according to the strategies outlined for Placer County in the Natural Environment Study.

2.8.3 Significant Effects: Vernal Pools and Wetlands. Vernal pools and other federally protected wetlands would be significantly affected by the Project, with 124 acres of vernal pool complex within the Parkway. Mitigation for impacts to wetlands would be directed by principles set by the Placer County Conservation Plan (if implemented), and would include avoidance, minimization, or mitigation through in-lieu fee payment or acquisition of conservation lands. Implementation of these mitigation strategies would reduce non-vernal pool wetland impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation for vernal pool impacts associated with the Project (with or without the PCCP) would have two components: (1) habitat preservation, and (2) habitat creation. Habitat preservation in Placer County is complicated by the lack of habitat available that has not already been designated for conservation or development. Therefore, preservation in Placer County might not be possible if there are not suitable lands that can be acquired. If it is necessary to direct vernal pool preservation efforts outside of Placer County it may be difficult to satisfy the mitigation requirements because the preservation would not meet the goals of the USFWS recovery plan for vernal pool species or the goals of the PCCP. Habitat creation in Placer County is possible, but creating habitat that meets the same functions as the affected habitat could be difficult. Vernal pools rely on a close relationship between upland habitats and small-scale hydrologic conditions. If a site does not have the right subsurface conditions (a seasonally perched groundwater table over a hardpan or claypan), it may be difficult to achieve the appropriate duration of ponding and therefore the vernal pool flora and aquatic fauna may not become established. Much of the land that is potentially available for vernal pool creation in western Placer County has been cultivated in the past which often disrupts the topography and the subsurface hydrology. To the extent that replacement, re-creation, or restoration of vernal pools would be feasible, this impact would be reduced. Implementation of the mitigation strategies would substantially lessen the impact of the loss of vernal pool wetlands. However, because the mitigation strategies do not guarantee replacement of the affected onsite vernal pools, SPRTA has determined that the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The same Tier 1 Avoidance/Minimization Strategies, Tier 2 Consultation, Tier 2 Mitigation Commitments and Tier 2 Mitigation Considerations described in Finding 2.8.1 also apply to this Finding and provide facts to support the Finding.

2.9 Growth Inducing.

Potential Growth Impacts are addressed in detail in Section 6.1 of the Draft EIR. Section 6.1.4 of the Draft EIR addressed the Project in relation to existing development and conservation areas, proposed development projects (some of which have been approved subsequent to circulation of the Draft EIR) and constraints to development, such as political opposition to development and lack of services. That analysis explained it is difficult to draw any simple conclusion regarding the precise relationship between the Project and future growth in the Project area. The analysis concluded that the Project could influence proposed land uses or hasten the construction of some proposed uses, particularly in areas surrounding proposed future interchange locations. Improved access provided by the Project to land in south Sutter and southwestern Placer counties could be a factor in stimulating additional growth and development in areas not currently proposed for development, but this potential effect was found to be limited due to the nature of the Parkway as a limited-access road in an area that is already undergoing extensive and rapid urbanization. The Project could also be one of the factors encouraging growth to occur sooner than it might otherwise because it would provide improved access to adjacent areas. The effects of the growth that might occur sooner are addressed in the cumulative impacts analysis of the EIR.

Although the Project is expected to have growth inducing effects, the Project's contribution to regional growth will be limited by a number of factors, which include:

- No interchanges are provided within areas that are not already approved or proposed for development;
- All approved residential development that has not already been built is projected to be built out prior to 2020, when the Parkway is proposed to open, except for the Regional University Specific Plan and the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, which were approved subsequent to the Draft EIR;
- Real estate market pressures in the area have been and continue to be intense without the Project, and local government jurisdictions have been supportive of processing development applications in spite of anticipated regional transportation challenges, making it seem likely that much of the approved and proposed development may occur with or without the Project; and
- The Project includes a no-development buffer zone (see Section 2.4.4 of the Draft EIR) and the use of a conservation easement to further help preclude new interchanges and

help preserve agricultural and open space lands. See Section 4.5.2 of these Findings for further details.

Compared to the other build alternatives, the growth inducement potential of the Project could be more limited because a substantial portion of the Project corridor alignment lies immediately south of and parallel to the large planned Roseville Retention Basin, inhibiting the development of a new interchange. Similarly, a long portion of the Project corridor alignment runs along the southern edge of several sizable areas designated as Reserve Acquisition Area on the latest (August 2009) PCCP map. The presence of these relatively large features along the northernmost Project boundary would limit the potential for growth along the north side of the Project, while the more southerly corridor alignment alternatives have no similar features that would constrain or preclude growth from occurring both north and south of a roadway alignment in those locations (except for a block of Reserve Acquisition Area that stretches along the western edge of Placer County almost to the Sacramento County border, affecting all the build alternatives).

2.10 Hydrology and Floodplains

2.10.1 Significant Effect: Cumulative Hydrology and Floodplains. The Project will contribute to cumulative effects on hydrology and floodplains. The combined effects of floodplain encroachment associated with multiple projects could exacerbate adverse impacts associated with individual projects, through cumulative loss of pervious surfaces and a corresponding increase in the volume and rate of runoff due to reduced percolation of surface water. This also could lead to increased flooding risk as land throughout the area covered under the cumulative impact scenario is converted from pervious surface to development, and overall peak flow rates and runoff volumes are increased.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1, 2 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- Sutter County and Placer County General Plan policies and programs are intended to offset the potential direct and cumulative flooding and water quality problems that may arise from development. New developments are required to detain offsite drainage such that the rate of runoff is maintained at pre-development levels. Because peak runoff rates from new development would be maintained at pre-development levels, there would be no increases in peak flows. Both Sutter and Placer counties have ordinances that limit construction in floodplains.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the EIR). These

alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made which directly or indirectly help to avoid impacts on hydrology and floodplains. These efforts included:
  - The use of bridges to span floodplains. Culverts would be used at smaller creek crossings as appropriate, depending on local conditions and permit requirements. The Pleasant Grove Creek floodplain would be crossed by bridges (one in each direction) supported by abutments located approximately 800 feet on either side of the creek to avoid the riparian habitat associated with the creek.
  - Roadway elevation within the 100-year floodplain such that the bottom of any new bridges would be above the 100-year water surface elevation. The roadway support structures and bridges would be designed to minimize environmental impact and not impede stream and flood flows.
  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road. This would help to minimize floodplain and hydrological impacts.
  - The location of the Parkway within a non-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone. This would help to minimize floodplain and hydrological impacts.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on hydrology and floodplains. Coordination will include development of specific design details described below to minimize impacts and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed development in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- Tier 2 design will include the following strategies to reduce potential hydrological and floodplain impacts.
  - Limitation of temporary disturbance to minimum areas necessary for construction and restoration of disturbed areas to pre-Project conditions.
  - Avoidance and/or minimization of construction activities in or near creeks and floodplains, including limiting amount of fill placed in creeks.
  - Use of the least intrusive construction methods reasonably available.

- Design of features (e.g., culverts, drainage systems, and bridges) to avoid increasing flow velocities that may cause or contribute to downstream erosion and flooding and minimize potential for debris clogging that could cause flooding. Bridges and columns will be designed such that increase in the Base Flood Elevation will be less than one foot as specified by FEMA (see Section 3.1 Placer Parkway Hydrology and Floodplains Technical Report (URS, 2007d).

- Use of structural runoff controls, such as vegetated swales.

- Incorporation of appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., provided appropriate detention and use vegetation to reduce flow velocities and peak discharges).

- Maximization of the angle of stream crossing to as close to 90% as possible.

- Implementation of Caltrans/Sutter County/Placer County BMPs as described in the Caltrans Statewide Stormwater Management Plan.

- Compliance with standard conditions in the form of regulatory requirements of federal, state and local agencies including Sutter County, Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and Reclamation District 1000 requirements for siting and design of facilities and hydrologic modification and floodplain encroachment guidance and siting/design guidance from FHWA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE), Caltrans, and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Tier 2 design would consider, where possible, implementation of the following strategies to reduce potential impacts on hydrology and floodplains:

  - Provision of sufficient setback distances in accordance with Caltrans and county requirements between the highway right-of-way and wetlands or riparian areas.

  - Location of the Parkway and bridges away from sensitive areas and establish buffer zones.

- The Project Proponent will evaluate the potential use of an expansion of the Reason Farms retention basin as part of mitigation for the Parkway. Such an expansion would require City of Roseville approval and additional environmental review.

- The Project Proponent will identify and address, as needed, Pleasant Grove Creek/Curry Creek Watershed Management Groups' requirements.

- Objectives from the Pleasant Grove/Curry Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ERP) may be relevant and should be considered during planning, design, and construction of Placer Parkway.

Even with these mitigation strategies, SPRTA has determined that the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts may be cumulatively considerable, because it cannot be certain that all cumulative hydrology and floodplain impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

2.11 Water Quality

2.11.1 Significant Effect: Cumulative Water Quality. Future development projects would result in development of a large portion of the study area and adjacent areas. This would result in an increase in impervious services and loss of water features such as streams, wetlands, and vernal pools. The combined effects of increased areas of impervious surfaces associated with multiple projects, with the potential for the paved roadway surfaces to carry increased runoff from the roadway to the study area streams, could exacerbate adverse water quality impacts associated with individual projects through a corresponding increase in the volume and rate of runoff due to reduced percolation of surface water. Additionally, construction in, across, and/or over streams, wetlands, vernal pools, and canals has the potential to degrade water quality. The potential adverse impacts on water quality associated with this development would contribute to cumulative impacts on water quality in the study area.

Findings. The Board hereby makes findings 1, 2 and 3.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that, although the impact of the Project has been reduced, it cannot feasibly be mitigated to a level of insignificance. The remaining unavoidable effect is acceptable when balanced against the facts set forth in the Statement of Overriding Considerations.

- The Sutter County and Placer County General Plan policies and programs are intended to offset the potential direct and cumulative flooding and water quality problems that may arise from development. Both Sutter and Placer counties have ordinances that limit construction in floodplains.

- Placer County's General Plan policies and programs are intended to offset the potential direct and cumulative water quality problems that may arise from development. New developments are required to detain onsite drainage such that the rate of runoff is maintained at predevelopment levels. Because peak runoff rates from new development would be maintained at predevelopment levels, increases in channel erosion and sedimentation are not expected to occur.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

The Tier 1 avoidance and minimization strategies described in Section 2.10.1 also apply to water quality. The same Tier 2 Consultation and Tier 2 Mitigation Commitments and Considerations described in Finding 2.10.1 also apply to this Finding and provide facts to support the Finding.

Even with these mitigation strategies, SPRTA has determined that the Project's incremental contribution to cumulative impacts may be cumulatively considerable, because it cannot be certain that all cumulative water quality impacts would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

3.0 POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT OR WHICH CAN BE MITIGATED BELOW A LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE.

3.1 Land Use.

3.1.1 Potential Effect: Potentially Bisected Parcels. The Project would potentially bisect 36 parcels in the study area.[2] This is considered an impact because a bisected parcel may have limited access and the amount of usable land may be reduced due to the no-development buffer.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- The Project Proponent will continue to work with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to avoid or minimize impacts on planned and proposed development within the study area. Coordination will include development of specific project design details for the Parkway and other projects to minimize impacts, such as landscaping treatments, lighting details, etc. PCTPA will continue to provide these agencies with Parkway alignment information to assist in their processing of development applications relative to the selected corridor.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To maintain existing and future local roadway connectivity (for emergency access, farming operations and community access), which will contribute to avoidance of land use conversion, over-crossings will be constructed, as appropriate, to convey traffic over the Parkway. These over-crossings would not connect to the Parkway.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- In consultation with local jurisdictions, strategies considered at Tier 2 will include efforts in the design of the Parkway to avoid or reduce impacts, such as:

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[2] As explained in Section 1.3, the analysis in these Findings is based on the current action, which is approval of a corridor for preservation, within which the future Placer Parkway will be preliminarily designed, analyzed in a Tier 2 or Project level EIR, and, if pursued after Tier 2 analysis, constructed and operated. The analysis and impact conclusions in the EIR and the Findings address effects of future construction and operation of Placer Parkway as reasonably foreseeable effects of preservation of the roadway corridor, even though the action before the SPRTA Board at this time is limited to preservation of a corridor, which will have only limited environmental impacts.

- Appropriate adjustments to the location of the actual roadway within the Parkway corridor alignment.
- Provision of alternative access to remnant parcels.
- Determination of the number, location and design of specific features such as over-crossings.

- At Tier 2, the identification of bisected parcels would enable parcel-specific mitigation to be developed. Strategies to reduce impacts on individual affected parcels could include providing access between the remnant portions of bisected parcels via frontage roads and overcrossings, crafting agreements with agricultural property owners that would include residual rights provisions to encourage continuation of farming activities in the area of the buffer zone that would not be used for the Parkway, or rezoning or purchasing remnant parcels that would no longer be viable for continued use under existing zoning. Any property purchases would comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation and Assistance Real Properties Acquisition Act.

3.1.2 Potential Effect: Compatibility with Adjacent Land Use. The Project area and adjacent surrounding areas are primarily used for agriculture. The Project's effects on commercial, industrial, and public facilities would not be expected to adversely affect land use within the study area because the Parkway would potentially benefit those land uses. The Project would purchase more right-of-way than is required for the footprint of the Parkway, partly to create a buffer between adjacent land uses and minimize the Project's impacts to farmland and other agricultural uses. Local access would be maintained. Incompatibility with adjacent land uses would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

Findings. The Board hereby finds that incompatibility with adjacent land uses would be less than significant.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

- The Parkway would be compatible with the existing urban uses and is expected to advance economic development goals adopted for these areas by improving goods movement between the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan ("SPSP"), near SR 70/99 and the SIAP near SR 65 and Interstate 80 in the Roseville/Rocklin area.

- The no-development buffer zone would help preserve the rural character of at least a strip of the agriculturally designated areas within all three segments by preventing development from extending to the roadway's edge. However, except in small portions of the Western Segment and somewhat larger portions of the Central Segment, much of the area through which the Parkway would be constructed is expected to be converted from agricultural uses to more urban or suburban uses under the 2040 development scenario, even without Placer Parkway. PCTPA is working with local land use planning agencies to avoid or minimize impacts on proposed development within the Project study area. The

Parkway could bring greater certainty to future land use planning efforts through the selection and preservation of a transportation corridor, so that ROW can be acquired to preserve a transportation corridor in which a roadway could be built in the future in conjunction with the construction of other planned projects in the area.

- In addition, the Project would preserve ROW for a regional highway that, upon completion, would reduce existing and anticipated congestion on the local and regional transportation system in southwestern Placer County and south Sutter County. Through its coordinated planning efforts, PCTPA has diminished the potential for conflicts with future development by initiating communication with all interested parties and stakeholders in the area so that other parties are aware of the Project and can consider the Parkway proposal in relation to other planned development.

- Suggested mechanisms to reduce land use compatibility impacts are land purchases/leases that would allow for continued use of the buffer or agricultural purposes, to be considered in Tier 2.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- The Tier 2 mitigation commitments and considerations identified in Section 3.1.1 are also relevant to land use compatibility.

3.1.3 Potential Effect: Consistency with Zoning Acreage Requirements. The Project would create one parcel that would be inconsistent with the minimum parcel size requirements under existing zoning.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Mitigation strategies include General Plan Amendments or Zoning Ordinance Amendments to change General Plan land use designations and zoning. For parcels no longer meeting minimum size requirements, alternative mitigation could include enactment of a zoning overlay district for parcels reduced in size that would recognize the special nonconforming nature of these properties or purchase of remainder parcels in their entirety to eliminate the zoning conflict.

3.1.4 Potential Effect: Consistency with Applicable General Plan Policies and Other Local Plans. The Project would potentially conflict with certain policies contained in the Sutter County General Plan, the Placer County General Plan, and the Sunset Industrial Plan Area, which are described below.

The Sutter County General Plan policy C-6b states that "no parcel meeting the minimum parcel size as identified on the General Plan land use diagram shall be diminished to a

size less than the minimum parcel size as identified on the land use diagram." Policies 6.A-6 and 6.A-7, related to preservation of farmlands, are similar. The Project has the potential to conflict with these policies, as it could create remnant parcels that do not meet the minimum size requirements under current zoning.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- Mitigation strategies as previously identified in section 2.1 of the findings include General Plan Amendments or Zoning Ordinance Amendments to change General Plan land use designations and zoning. For parcels no longer meeting minimum size requirements, alternative mitigation could include enactment of a zoning overlay district for parcels reduced in size that would recognize the special nonconforming nature of these properties or purchase of remainder parcels in their entirety to eliminate the zoning conflict. With implementation of these mitigation strategies, impacts related to minimum parcel size would be less than significant.

- PCCP is currently under development by Placer County. It would cover the lands in Placer County through which all of the Placer Parkway alternatives would traverse. SPRTA is working with Placer County staff to ensure that the Parkway would not conflict with the PCCP. The Placer Parkway could be a covered activity under the PCCP. It is unknown exactly if or when the plan will be adopted or implemented. Since the PCCP is not adopted, there are no conflicts and therefore no impacts would occur. No mitigation is warranted.

- The Project is in conformance with the Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP), except for a small area west of SR 70/99 which is required for the Placer Parkway/SR 70/99 Interchange, which is not permitted for development in the NBHCP. This area is also shown as an interchange in the approved SPSP. The Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program for the Project requires that negotiations with the USFWS will be undertaken to amend the NBHCP or provide such other compensation as would meet the intent of the NBHCP with respect to protection of special-status species in the NBHCP service area. With implementation of this mitigation commitment in Tier 2, there would be no conflicts with the NBHCP and therefore no impacts would occur.

3.2 Population and Housing.

3.2.1 Potential Effect: Disruption or Division of the Physical Arrangement of an Established Community or Employment Center. Four rural residential areas occur in the study area. The Project would not directly affect any existing community services in the study area, such as schools or fire stations. The Project would directly affect about 15 acres at

the northwestern corner of the Sankey-Pleasant Grove community and would impact several residences located east of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks in this vicinity. While it would not split or divide this community, it would affect several rural residential properties along its northern edge, near the railroad right-of-way north of Sankey Road. This would be a potentially significant impact.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

- Since no vital community services or gathering places would be in either of the two affected areas, it may be possible to mitigate this potential impact and minimize potential adverse effects in these areas by relocating the displaced households within or close to the affected rural residential communities, if they so desire. Since no vital community services or gathering places would be affected in either of these two areas, no mitigation is required beyond standard provisions of the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Assistance Act. With implementation of these mitigation strategies, impacts would be less than significant.

3.2.2 Potential Effect: Displacement of People, Businesses, or Jobs. The Project would displace 10 isolated homes or farmsteads and would affect a rural residential community in the study area. The Project would impact 14.7 acres of the rural residential settlement. This would be a potentially significant impact.

The Project would directly affect an employment center in the Eastern Segment, in the Sunset Industrial Area, and would not affect any employment centers in the Central Segment. The Project would impact several businesses located on the south side of Sankey Road. This would be a potentially significant impact.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During the alternatives screening process, efforts were made to avoid socioeconomic and community impacts. Examples of such efforts included

modification and/or elimination of PSR conceptual corridor alignments (see Section 2.5 of the EIR) to avoid community impacts. These efforts include:

- Elimination of a northern alignment between SR 70/99 and Amoruso Acres, and a connection to SR 70/99 North of Sankey Road, because of impacts to the Pleasant Grove community, growth inducement potential, agriculture impacts and reduced transportation benefits.

- Elimination of a Parkway connection to SR 65 at Blue Oaks Boulevard partly on the basis of avoiding community effects, which would have included restriction of street access, construction through or adjacent to residential areas, and removal of homes and businesses.

- Elimination of a portion of a central corridor alignment that encroached into a large wetland/vernal pool/conservation area at the confluence of two main branches of Curry Creek was eliminated and the alignment moved northward. This minimized disruption to the established community near Pleasant Grove and Sankey Road.

- Adjustments were made to southern corridor alignments to reflect different distances between it and Riego/Baseline Road. Input was received that the Parkway should lie directly adjacent to Riego/Baseline Road to minimize the potential for growth inducement and to reduce habitat fragmentation by placing the two roadways next to each other. Based on a number of factors (see Section 2.5.3.3 of the EIR), including impacts to a residential community in the vicinity of Country Acres, this alternative was eliminated.

- Potential more southerly alignments, whether connecting to SR 65 at Blue Oaks Boulevard or at other interchange locations, would pass through the City of Roseville and require the removal of substantial existing development. The resulting socioeconomic and community impacts and costs make such alternatives infeasible, and they were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made to avoid socioeconomic and community impacts. These efforts included:

  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road to avoid inducing urban growth in areas not designated for development in existing general plans and to maintain the rural character of western Placer County and south Sutter County.

  - The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone (see Section 2.2.4 of the EIR) that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone, subject to performance standards to be developed in Tier 2.

- During the environmental review process, PCTPA worked with local jurisdictions to plan for the Parkway and planned/proposed development in order to reduce the likelihood of environmental impacts, including socioeconomic and community impacts. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments.

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions, residents, and businesses in the study area, in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of socioeconomic and community impacts. Coordination will include development of specific design details to minimize impacts, including consideration of the location of the roadway footprint.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To maintain existing and future local roadway connectivity (for emergency access, farming operations and community access), over-crossings will be constructed, as appropriate, to convey traffic over the Parkway. These over-crossings will not connect to the Parkway.

- Any households or businesses displaced by the Parkway will receive relocation assistance payments and counseling in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act, as amended, to ensure that any displaced residents are relocated to a decent, safe, and sanitary home. All eligible displacees will be entitled to moving expenses and other benefits as provided by the act. All benefits and services will be provided equitably to all relocatees without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origins, or disability as specified under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- The Project could disrupt an existing rural residential community by displacing homes and converting a portion of the Sankey-Pleasant Grove community to a transportation corridor. Since no vital community services or gathering places would be impacted in either of the two affected areas, it may be possible to mitigate this potential impact and minimize potential adverse effects in these areas by relocating the displaced households within or close to the affected rural residential communities, if they so desire. Since no vital community services or gathering places would be impacted in either of these two areas, no mitigation is required beyond standard provisions of the Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Assistance Act.

- In consultation with local jurisdictions, mitigation strategies considered at Tier 2 will include the development of design improvements to reduce impacts, such as:

  - Appropriate adjustments to the location of the actual roadway within the Parkway corridor alignment;

- Provision of alternative access to remnant parcels; and
- Determination of the number, location and design of specific features such as over-crossings.

3.3 Public Services and Utilities.

3.3.1 Potential Effect: Displacement or Disruption of Public Services and Utilities. During construction of Placer Parkway, the ability of emergency service providers, including fire responders and police, to meet response time goals could be temporarily affected by traffic delays on arterials that feed into the Parkway. These temporary construction impacts would be potentially significant.

The Project would affect the planned Reason Farms municipal facility, encroaching on 96.0 acres of the facility. The Project would not impact the retention aspects of this facility. The City of Roseville is planning for and accommodating the Project corridor alignment in their planning process, so no disruption is anticipated. No mitigation is warranted.

The Western Placer Waste Management Authority sanitary landfill may be affected by the Project's interchange at Fiddyment Road. The area immediately west of the landfill has been identified as a landfill expansion area. Encroachment, if any, would affect approximately 5 to 6 acres of the southeastern corner of this property. The encroachment required for realignment of Sunset Boulevard West would reduce the useful life of the landfill expansion area; to what extent is not known and would depend on a variety of technical and operating parameters that would be identified closer to the time the landfill expansion facility would be planned and permitted. The existing landfill is expected to meet waste disposal needs to 2036 or 2045 (Golder Associates, 2005; Schwall, 2006), so it is likely that the expansion area would not be placed into use until after the Parkway interchange is completed, if it is approved. Impacts could be potentially significant.

No other community facilities or services, such as schools or fire stations, would be directly affected by any of the corridor alignment alternatives. Therefore, there would be no impacts.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

- Overall emergency response time is anticipated to improve with the addition of Placer Parkway as a result of faster driving times along the Parkway route and reduced congestion on local roadways. Final design will include features to allow emergency turnaround routes along the Parkway for emergency providers. Since local access will be retained, emergency providers would still be able to cross over the Parkway in localized areas.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered (see Section 2.5.4). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- The selection of a corridor for the Parkway during the Tier 1 process will contribute to the avoidance and/or minimization of impacts on public services and utilities. The confirmation of the general alignment of the Parkway will inform other developments and plans in the general vicinity, which should then be able to avoid locating recreational or other public services and utilities resources where they might conflict with the Parkway.

- During the Tier 1 environmental review process, PCTPA worked with local jurisdictions to plan for the Parkway and proposed development in order to reduce the likelihood of environmental impacts, including land use incompatibilities. Results of this coordination included modification and elimination of alternatives and refinement of corridor alignments. PCTPA also coordinated Project planning with local emergency service providers to ensure the Parkway design will accommodate their needs and minimize potential adverse impacts on response times. Similarly, PCTPA coordinated planning efforts with the City of Roseville to ensure that the Project's conceptual design is compatible with recreation and other facilities being planned for the Reason Farms Retention Basin.

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on public service and utilities. Coordination will include development of specific project design details for the Parkway and other projects to minimize impacts, such as the location of the roadway footprint within the adopted corridor, and cooperation between the Project Proponent and local jurisdictions to ensure other planned facilities are located outside of the Parkway corridor and/or no-development buffer zone, where impacts to such facilities may be minimized.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To maintain existing and future local roadway connectivity (for emergency access, farming operations and community access), which will contribute to avoidance of public service impacts, over-crossings will be constructed, as appropriate, to convey traffic over the Parkway. These over-crossings will not connect to the Parkway.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Strategies related to potential reduction in the useful life of the landfill expansion area could include providing compensatory land, providing or participating in programs to reduce generation or increase diversion through new programs or new technologies, or contributing to infrastructure improvements that will eventually be needed to send materials off site. Given the magnitude of the impact and the long time period available for planning minimization strategies, impacts to the facility are likely to be minor.

3.3.2 Potential Effect: New Demand on Public Services or Utilities. The development of the Parkway would require the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities within the selected corridor, to manage stormwater runoff from the new roadway. Design of these new facilities would be incorporated into Parkway plans, and at this time no expansion of existing facilities is expected to be required. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

The Parkway would generate some solid waste during construction. The Parkway would comply with federal, state, and local requirements for the disposal of construction-related solid waste. Any hazardous materials that would be used during construction would be stored, used, and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations for transport and disposal. Therefore, there would be no impact.

The Parkway would require nominal amounts of water during construction, and irrigation water for landscaping. This demand would be estimated during Tier 2 environmental analysis and quantified when the landscaping plans are completed during final design. Since landscaping concepts for the Parkway envision low-maintenance plantings, demand is not expected to be substantial. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

No wastewater would be generated by the Parkway and therefore it would not impact wastewater treatment facilities or require expansion of existing facilities. Therefore, there would be no impact.

Findings. The Board hereby finds there will be no significant impacts.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts detailed above indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

3.3.3 Potential Effect: Displacement or Disruption of Parks and/or Recreational Facilities. There are no parks within any of the corridor alignment alternatives. There would be no increase in the use of existing parks or recreational facilities associated directly with the Parkway. The planning for recreational facilities at the City of Roseville's Retention Basin site is proceeding in cooperation with the Parkway, and no impacts are expected. Therefore, there would be no impact on parks.

Findings. The Board hereby finds there will be no impacts.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts above indicate that this potential impact is not significant.

3.4 Visual and Aesthetics

3.4.1 Potential Effect: Scenic Highways. There are no designated state scenic highways within the Project vicinity. There are no eligible officially Designated State Scenic Highways within views of the study area. Therefore, no impact to a State Designated Scenic Highway is anticipated as a result of any of the alternatives.

Findings. The Board hereby finds there will be no impact.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts above indicate that this potential impact is not significant.

3.4.2 Potential Effect: Light and Glare. No glare would result because no buildings or structures with reflective coatings would be built. The Parkway, by necessity, would include the installation of nighttime lighting fixtures, and the resulting night-time light is a potential significant impact on night-time views.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- Mitigation strategies, as detailed in section 2.3.1 of these Findings, include design considerations such as shielding lighting elements, using lower voltage lighting for planting areas, and proposing lighting fixtures that complement the visual character of the area. With implementation of these mitigation strategies, impacts would be less than significant.

3.5 Cultural Resources.

3.5.1 Potential Effect: Archaeological Resources. Based on this program level Tier 1 analysis, no known archaeological resources are present within the corridor alignment alternatives. Unknown archaeological resources that may be present in the study area could be adversely affected during construction. This could be a significant impact.

A significant impact would occur if the Parkway disturbed previously unknown human remains during construction.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 2 – Consultation/Coordination

- Where archaeological resources are identified that can not be avoided, consultation will be initiated with SHPO to agree on the most appropriate approach for mitigation.
- Where historic, built environment resources are identified that can not be avoided, consultation will be initiated with SHPO to identify potential strategies to avoid, minimize, or mitigate such impacts.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- If previously undetected archaeological resources are encountered during construction of the Parkway following the Tier 2 analysis, consistent with Caltrans policy, ground-disturbing activities within the vicinity would be halted until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the nature and significance of the find. If the discovery includes human remains, the Placer and/or Sutter County Coroners and Department of Museums would also be consulted.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- If more extensive investigations carried out for the Tier 2 analysis identify previously unknown archaeological resources in the selected corridor alignment, then efforts can be made to align the roadway within the chosen corridor, and to develop a roadway design that avoids or minimizes impacts on these resources as far as possible.

3.5.2 Potential Effect: Paleontological Resources. Based on this program level Tier 1 analysis, no known paleontological resources are present within the corridor alignment alternatives. Unknown paleontological resources that may be present in the study area could be adversely affected during construction. This could be a significant impact. The mitigation strategy identified in this event would require (1) preconstruction meetings to train construction workers about paleontological resources and notification procedures; (2) monitoring of construction areas contained geological units designated with a potentially Moderate or High sensitivity rating, and (3) collecting, preparing, identifying and curating significant fossil material into a state-designated repository. This would reduce impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The following facts or mitigation measures indicate that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- If paleontological resources are identified that cannot be avoided, the following mitigation strategies will be employed:
  - Pre-construction meetings should be held with key construction personnel to provide brief discussions pertaining to paleontological resource significance, visual identification, and discovery notification procedures.
  - Proposed construction areas will be monitored by a professional paleontologist during construction, to ensure that subsurface paleontological resources are adequately protected. Monitoring will include provisions for intermittent checking of excavation spoils for significant paleontological materials during site grading and excavation and measures for salvaging fossils, as necessary.
  - If unique paleontological resources are discovered, then all significant fossil material will be collected, prepared, identified, and curated into a state-designated scientific repository. Salvage operations will be conducted in accordance with professional paleontological standards (e.g., Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards)

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- If more extensive investigations carried out for the Tier 2 analysis identify previously unknown paleontological resources in the selected corridor alignment, then efforts can be made to develop a roadway design within the chosen corridor that avoids or minimize impacts on these resources as far as possible.

3.6 Traffic and Transportation.

3.6.1 Potential Effects: Non-motorized Transportation. Placer Parkway would be a controlled-access facility with interchanges or grade-separations at all existing or planned roadways along its route between SR 65 and SR 70/99. Thus it would not include bus turnouts or bicycle racks. The Placer Parkway median is wide enough (100 feet) to accommodate future transit facilities that may be proposed. It could be readily designed to avoid direct impacts on existing and planned transit facilities, routes, or services. Placer Parkway would reduce traffic volumes on most local roadways, except for roadway segments near interchanges along Placer Parkway. Thus, the Parkway would generally have a positive impact on transit travel times in the TASA.

Placer Parkway would not directly remove or obstruct existing and planned bicycle facilities/bikeways. It would be a controlled-access facility with interchanges or grade-separations at all existing or planned roadways along its route between SR 65 and SR 70/99.

This facility could be readily designed to avoid direct impacts on future bicycle facilities/bikeways. No impacts are identified.

Findings. The Board hereby finds no impact to non-motorized transportation.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts described above support the finding that this potential impact is not significant.

3.7 Air Quality.

3.7.1 Potential Effect: Operational Air Quality – PCAPCD and FRAQMD. In 2040, the Project would not exceed the PCAPCD significance thresholds for the following criteria pollutants: ROG, PM_{10} and SO_x. In 2040, the Project would not exceed the FRAQMD significance thresholds for the following criteria pollutant: PM_{10}.

The Project would not conflict or obstruct implementation of the Air Quality Attainment Plan (AQAP) as the Project is included in the Regional Transportation Plan for Placer County, SACOG's MTP, and therefore conforms to the State Implementation Plan.

Findings. The Board hereby find no air quality operational impacts under PCAPCD thresholds for ROG, PM_{10} and SO_x and under FRAQMD thresholds, for PM_{10}.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts described above for ROG, PM_{10}, and SO_x, based on the air quality modeling in the Final EIR, support the finding.

- All build alternatives would result in similar but smaller changes in air quality under Existing Plus Project conditions as would occur under 2020 conditions, which is the projected opening year of the Parkway.

- All build alternatives would result in a small incremental increase in criteria pollutants over the No-Build Alternative, ranging from 1.7 to 2.7 percent. The differences among build alternatives are minimal, between 1 and 2 percent.

3.7.2 Potential Effect; Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The Draft EIR included a preliminary quantification of greenhouse gas emissions ("GHG") operational impact of the Project (see page 4.9-29 and the Air Quality Technical Memorandum, pages 6-6 – 6-7 and 7-8). That quantification represented an overestimate of GHG emissions due to several factors, including the fact that information was not available to calculate the emissions reductions due to the decrease in travel time, faster traveling speed, and less congested roadways (reductions in vehicle hours traveled) with the Project. GHG emissions were determined not to be a significant impact; further analysis will be conducted in Tier 2.

Findings. The Board hereby finds that GHG emissions will not be significant.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts described above support the Finding.

- Once Tier 2 level information is available, it is expected that GHG emissions associated with the Project will be less than presently calculated because the

calculations in Tier 2 will account for travel speed and the reduction in congestion associated with the Parkway.

- A major strategy for reducing the State's GHG emissions, in both the AB 32 Scoping Plan and SB 375, is Regional Transportation-Related Greenhouse Gas Targets. It is expected that the regional targets will rely on or build upon the regional "blueprint" process, a process that SACOG has incorporated into its 2050 growth plan. SACOG's 2050 growth plan – the Blueprint – is a nationally-recognized smart (compact) growth strategy. The Project is included in the Preferred Blueprint Scenario and is thus consistent with regional plans and policies designed to accommodate population growth in a carbon efficient way, as stated in the AB 32 Scoping Plan, page C-75.

3.8 Noise.

3.8.1 <u>Potential Effect: Construction Noise</u>. The Parkway would have a substantial increase in temporary or periodic ambient noise levels in the study area during construction.

<u>Findings</u>. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

<u>Facts in Support of Findings</u>. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact will be mitigated to below a level of significance.

<u>Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures</u>

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- To minimize construction noise, the following construction noise control strategies will be required to be implemented by the contractor:
  - Minimize nighttime and weekend work.
  - Use portable noise screens to provide shielding for jack hammering or other similar activities when work is close to the hotels.
  - Compliance with Caltrans' Standard Specifications 7-1.011 (July 1999) "*Sound Control Requirements.*" The contractor shall comply with all local sound control and noise level rules, regulations, and ordinances that apply to any work performed pursuant to the contract. Each internal combustion engine, used for any purpose on the job or related to the job, should be equipped with a muffler of a type recommended by the manufacturer. No internal combustion engine should be operated without said muffler.

3.9 Hydrology.

3.9.1 Potential Effect: Increase in Impervious Surface Area Resulting in Increased Stormwater Runoff. The Parkway would result in the construction of paved surface areas in the study area, thereby increasing stormwater runoff. Increased runoff could contribute to downstream flooding, and could exceed the hydraulic capacity of existing drainage facilities, resulting in localized flooding. As a consequence of vegetation removal during construction activities, stormwater runoff may be temporarily increased. Also, soil excavation and grading during construction could increase the risk of erosion and sedimentation of nearby water bodies.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

- All build alternatives would increase impervious surfaces which would lead to potential increases in runoff; among the alternatives, the Project would have the least amount.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Tier 2 design would consider, where possible, implementation of the following strategies to reduce potential impacts on hydrology and floodplains:
  - Alignment of the roadway within the corridor to decrease impervious cover by reducing the area of pavement or number of road miles.
  - Mimic natural patterns as much as possible, including considering Low Impact Development whenever appropriate.

3.9.2 Potential Effect: Stream and Creek Crossings Affecting Downstream Hydrology. The Project would require crossing creeks and streams, which may affect the hydrology of downstream segments. Crossings could affect hydrologic integrity and contribute to constriction or blockage of natural streamflow and/or natural streambed migration. They could result in modification of downstream natural flooding regime or reduction in downstream transport of sediment and nutrients. The Project crosses Curry Creek, Pleasant Grove Creek, and tributaries to Orchard Creek.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were considered (see Section 2.5.4 of the EIR). These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made which directly or indirectly help to avoid impacts on hydrology and floodplains. These efforts included:

  - The use of bridges to span floodplains. Culverts would be used at smaller creek crossings as appropriate, depending on local conditions and permit requirements. The Pleasant Grove Creek floodplain would be crossed by bridges (one in each direction) supported by abutments located approximately 800 feet on either side of the creek to avoid the riparian habitat associated with the creek.

  - Roadway elevation within the 100-year floodplain such that the bottom of any new bridges would be above the 100-year water surface elevation. The roadway support structures and bridges would be designed to minimize environmental impact and not impede stream and flood flows.

  - The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road. This would help to minimize floodplain and hydrological impacts.

  - The location of the Parkway within a non-development buffer zone that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone. This would help to minimize floodplain and hydrological impacts.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on hydrology and floodplains. Coordination will include development of specific Project design details described below to minimize impacts and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed development in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- Tier 2 design will include the following strategies to reduce potential hydrological and floodplain impacts.

  - Limitation of temporary disturbance to minimum areas necessary for construction and restoration of disturbed areas to pre-Project conditions.

- Avoidance and/or minimization of construction activities in or near creeks and floodplains, including limiting amount of fill placed in creeks.
- Use of the least intrusive construction methods reasonably available.
- Design of features (e.g., culverts, drainage systems, and bridges) to avoid increasing flow velocities that may cause or contribute to downstream erosion and flooding and minimize potential for debris clogging that could cause flooding. Bridges and columns will be designed such that increase in the Base Flood Elevation will be less than one foot as specified by FEMA (see Section 3.1 Placer Parkway Hydrology and Floodplains Technical Report (URS, 2007d).
- Use of structural runoff controls, such as vegetated swales.
- Incorporation of appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) (e.g., provided appropriate detention and use vegetation to reduce flow velocities and peak discharges).
- Maximization of the angle of stream crossing to as close to 90% as possible.
- Implementation of Caltrans/Sutter County/Placer County BMPs as described in the Caltrans Statewide Stormwater Management Plan.
- Compliance with standard conditions in the form of regulatory requirements of federal, state and local agencies including Sutter County, Placer County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and Reclamation District 1000 requirements for siting and design of facilities and hydrologic modification and floodplain encroachment guidance and siting/design guidance from FHWA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USCOE), Caltrans, and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- Tier 2 design would consider, where possible, implementation of the following strategies to reduce potential impacts on hydrology and floodplains:
  - Provision of sufficient setback distances in accordance with Caltrans and county requirements between the highway right-of-way and wetlands or riparian areas.
  - Location of the Parkway and bridges away from sensitive areas and establish buffer zones.
- The Project Proponent will evaluate the potential use of an expansion of the Reason Farms retention basin as part of mitigation for the Parkway. Such an

expansion would require City of Roseville approval and additional environmental review.

- The Project Proponent will identify and address, as needed, Pleasant Grove Creek/Curry Creek Watershed Management Groups' requirements.

- Objectives from the Pleasant Grove/Curry Creek Ecosystem Restoration Plan (ERP) may be relevant and should be considered during planning, design, and construction of Placer Parkway.

3.9.3 Potential Effect: Floodplain Encroachment. The Parkway would cross designated 100-year floodplain areas. Impacts to floodplains include potential reduction of hydrologic integrity, reduction of beneficial floodplain values, and constriction or blockage of flows. Encroachment at creek crossings from fill placement or column installation within the floodplain could compromise creek capacity for conveyance of the 100-year flow and result in an increase in the base flood elevation and corresponding floodplain width upstream of the proposed crossing. In addition, increased flows due to increased impervious surfaces could also affect the floodplain. At some major creek crossings, sections of the Parkway would be elevated on a bridge. Bridges would be designed such that the base of any new bridges within floodplains would be above the 100-year water surface.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- The Tier 1 avoidance and mitigation strategies described in Section 3.9.2 also apply to floodplain encroachment. The same Tier 2 Consultation and Tier 2 Mitigation Commitments described in Finding 3.9.2 also apply to this Finding and provide facts to support the Finding.

3.10 Water Quality.

3.10.1 Potential Effect: Stormwater Runoff Due to Increase in Impervious Surface Area. The Project would result in the construction of paved surface areas in the study area, thereby increasing stormwater runoff. This would increase the potential for erosion during construction activities. Also, as a consequence of vegetation removal during construction activities, stormwater runoff may be temporarily increased.

Discharges of stormwater from rights-of-way, properties, facilities, and activities, including stormwater management activities in maintenance and operation of state-owned highways within the State of California, have been shown to be contributors of water pollutants. The quality and quantity of these discharges vary considerably and are affected by hydrology, geology, land use, season, and sequence and duration of hydrologic events. All build alternatives

could discharge roadway runoff that may contain pollutants into streams and other sensitive sites, and would have the potential to result in substantial erosion or siltation through local alteration of existing drainage pattern.

The Project would not substantially deplete groundwater supplies, as it would not use groundwater during either construction or operation. It would result in an increase in impervious surface related to the roadway pavement; however, runoff would be directed to adjacent unpaved surfaces in the median and shoulders, and groundwater recharge would not be affected. This would be a less-than-significant impact. No mitigation is warranted.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- All the strategies and commitments described in Section 3.9.1 and 3.9.2 apply here as well.

3.10.2 Potential Effect: Stream and Creek Crossings Affecting Water Quality. Stream crossings provide an opportunity for stormwater runoff that may contain pollutants to enter a waterway, affecting the water quality of downstream segments. Crossings may constrict or block natural streamflows that may result in erosion, and provide discharge point for pollutants to enter streams or creeks.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered. These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

- During development of the Tier 1 conceptual design of the Parkway, efforts were made which directly or indirectly helped to avoid impacts on water quality. These efforts included:

  - The use of bridges to span floodplains. Culverts would be used at smaller creek crossings as appropriate, depending on local conditions and permit

requirements. The Pleasant Grove Creek floodplain would be crossed by 1,600-foot multi-span bridges (one in each direction) supported by abutments located approximately 800 feet on either side of the creek to avoid the riparian habitat associated with the creek. Maximum span length would be 150 feet, with support by columns located outside of the ordinary high water level.

- Roadway elevation within the 100-year floodplain such that the bottom of any new bridges would be above the 100-year water surface elevation. The roadway support structures and bridges would be designed to minimize environmental impact and not impede stream and flood flows.

- The restriction of access between Pleasant Grove Road and Fiddyment Road. This would reduce the creation of impervious surfaces and associated water quality impacts.

- The location of the Parkway within a no-development buffer zone (see Section 2.5) that would preserve open space and agricultural uses adjacent to the Parkway and limit future development in the buffer zone, subject to performance standards to be developed in Tier 2. This would help to minimize water quality impacts.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent will continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts on water quality. Coordination will include development of specific design details to minimize impacts as described below, and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed development in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- Compliance with standard conditions in the form of regulatory requirements of federal, state and local agencies including compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements and Sutter and Placer county ordinances during Parkway construction and operations with respect to the development and implementation of a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and BMPs to prevent erosion, control runoff, reduce roadway and vehicle pollutants from entering watercourses; and prevention of pollution discharge off site. Additional details of these strategies are included in the Placer Parkway Water Quality Technical Memorandum. Specific strategies would include:

  - Meeting Sutter and Placer county, and Reclamation District No. 1000 requirements for siting and design of facilities.

  - Pursuant to the Phase II NPDES General Permit for Stormwater Discharges from Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems, the

Parkway also must incorporate long-term, post-construction BMPs and monitoring to protect water quality and control runoff. Projects in Placer County must currently comply with these requirements. To comply with federal and state Clean Water Act requirements, local agencies may be required to adhere to Low Impact Development (LID) principles to protect water quality in the interest of fish and wildlife. LID strategies that integrate BMPs to protect water quality may also reduce runoff quality. Compliance with the applicable Caltrans and county NPDES Stormwater Permits; includes preparation and implementation of a Water Quality Management Plan.

- Compliance with the NPDES General Construction Activity Stormwater Permit; includes preparation and implementation of an SWPPP.

- Compliance with the applicable Sutter and Placer county ordinances that require Erosion and Grading Plans.

- If the Parkway involves discharge or places fill material into navigable water or wetlands, an application for a Section 404 permit must be submitted to the USCOE. This permit is required to ensure that discharge will not violate water quality standards.

- If the Parkway requires realignment of streams, which may include installation of culverts in streams, a Streambed Alteration agreement must be obtained from CDFG.

- In the event that during detailed design the need arises for dewatering during construction, PCTPA will file an application for the Dewatering and Low Threat Discharges to Surface Waters Permit, Order No. 5-00-175 (NPDES CAG995001).

- The Caltrans Stormwater Quality Handbook (Caltrans, 2003a) Statewide Stormwater Management Plan (Caltrans, 2003b), and other Caltrans reference documents identify permanent and temporary BMPs that have been approved for statewide application and which must be considered during the planning and design process. Details of these BMPs are provided in the Placer Parkway Water Quality Technical Memorandum.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- To offset the increased volume of runoff created by the Parkway, the Parkway proponents could contribute to an expansion of the Reason Farms Regional Retention Basin. The Project Proponent will evaluate the potential use of an expansion of this retention basin as part of mitigation for the Parkway. Such an expansion would require City of Roseville approval and additional environmental review. PCTPA would also incorporate additional mitigation facilities to minimize run-off in areas outside of the Roseville Basin.

- The Project Proponent will identify and address, as needed, Pleasant Grove Creek/Curry Creek Watershed Management Groups' requirements. Objectives from the Pleasant Grove/ Curry Creek ERP may be relevant and should be considered during planning, design, and construction of Placer Parkway.

- Tier 2 design would consider, where possible, implementation of the following strategies to reduce potential impacts on water quality:

  - Limitation of disturbance during construction to minimize impacts, particularly near creeks, wetlands and vernal pool complexes, including limiting amount of fill placed in creeks, wetlands, or vernal pool complex areas and restoring disturbed areas to minimize erosion.

  - Locating the roadway to avoid or minimize impacts to streams and ecologically sensitive areas (e.g., wetlands and vernal pool complex areas).

  - Avoidance or minimization of stream crossings.

  - Consideration of bridges or viaducts across stream crossings where the angle of the crossing is 45 degrees or less.

  - Consideration of the use of a combination of a viaduct/conventional highway in the western part of the Parkway.

  - Alignment of the roadway within the corridor to decrease impervious cover by reducing the area of pavement or number of road miles.

  - Provision of sufficient setback distances in accordance with Caltrans and county requirements between the highway right-of-way and wetlands or riparian areas.

  - Location of the Parkway and bridges away from sensitive areas and establish buffer zones.

  - Mimic natural patterns as much as possible, including considering LID whenever appropriate.

- Locate the alternative as low in the watershed as possible, to minimize the area affected.
- Design features to avoid direct discharge of roadway runoff that may contain pollutants into streams and other sensitive sites (e.g., wetlands and vernal pool complex areas).
- Use of structural runoff controls, such as vegetated swales.
- Obtaining floodplain easements on private land adjacent to the Parkway in order to provide potential detention/retention facilities to mitigate excessive run-off and provide flood control.
- Identify and address, as needed, Natomas Basin Habitat Conservation Plan (NBHCP)'s Requirements, including ensuring that stormwater runoff from the Parkway should not be discharged directly into habitat areas of special-status species (see the Placer Parkway Water Quality Technical Memorandum for further details).

3.10.3 Potential Effect: Discharge of Pollutants Into Sensitive Areas. The amount of wetland and vernal pool complex areas crossed could be indicative of the potential for pollutants to be discharged into sensitive areas. Canal crossings also would have this potential. Amongst the build alternatives, the Project would cross through the smallest amount of wetlands area.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

- The facts described in Section 3.10.2 also support this finding.

3.11 Soils, Geology and Seismicity.

3.11.1 Potential Effect: Soils, Geology and Seismicity. The Project would result in some soil erosion and loss of topsoil associated with construction. In addition, there are localized areas with potential for subsidence and expansion. Erosion, subsidence and expansive soils could be a potentially significant impact. Standard construction techniques and the mitigation measures identified for reduction of erosion in Hydrology and Water Quality, would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level.

No faults delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map are located within or in the vicinity of the study area. The study area is located in a seismically quiescent region, thus strong ground shaking due to future earthquakes is not anticipated. The likelihood of seismic-related ground failure is remote. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

No known mineral resources or known mineral resource recovery sites are known to exist or to be delineated within the study area, which is classified as MRZ-4. Therefore, no impacts would result.

Findings. The Board hereby finds no impacts.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts described above support the finding.

3.12 Biological Resources.

3.12.1 Potential Effect: Endangered, Threatened, Candidate, and Fully Protected Species and Their Habitat. Construction of the Parkway is unlikely to adversely affect steelhead or fall-run Chinook salmon, as these species are not likely to be present in the study area except for occasional transient occurrences via the two drainage canals. Crossings of major streams and drainage canals would be accomplished via bridges that would be constructed to avoid impedance of fish passage. Best management practices to control erosion and minimize degradation for water quality would be implemented during construction of the Parkway at the water crossings to protect aquatic habitats in the streams. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted other than mitigation previously identified for protection of water quality, which would also mitigate impacts to fisheries. Section 2.8.1 of these Findings describes significant impacts on other species.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures previously described in section 3.9.2, and facts described above support the finding.

3.12.2 Potential Effect: Riparian Habitat. The Project would potentially impact riparian habitat, affecting 4.9 acres.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- Mitigation for impacts to riparian habitats would be directed by principles set by the Placer County Conservation Plan (if implemented), and would include avoidance, minimization, or mitigation through in-lieu fee payment or acquisition of conservation lands. If the PCCP were not adopted, mitigation strategies would include a combination of avoidance, minimization, and compensation. Compensation would include some combination of habitat preservation, restoration, and creation developed in coordination with federal, state, and local agencies. Compensatory habitat mitigation in the absence of the PCCP would be implemented according to the strategies outlined for Sutter County, above.

- Placer Parkway may contribute to the recovery effort identified in the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon through habitat protection and the establishment of conservation areas and reserves that will maintain or enhance species habitat values.

3.12.3 Potential Effect: Tree Protection Ordinance. The Project could have significant impacts on trees protected under the Placer County Tree Preservation Ordinance in the vicinity of the Pleasant Grove Creek crossing.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that the impact of the Project has been reduced below a level of insignificance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

- Impacts to protected trees would be mitigated by guidelines set forth in the Placer County Tree Preservation ordinance. This would include avoidance of protected trees where feasible, replacement in accordance with provisions of the ordinance, or payment of in-lieu fee as allowed by the ordinance.

3.12.4 Potential Effect: Conservation Lands. The Parkway would impact a portion of the area covered by the NBHCP. The Parkway is not in conflict with this plan and would mitigate for all impacts as required by the plan. The proposed PCCP is described in Section 4.14.1.3 of the EIR. Although the PCCP has not yet been adopted, PCTPA has requested and Placer County has agreed that the Parkway would be a covered activity if this plan were adopted, and the Parkway project would abide by mitigation strategies identified in the plan. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

Findings. The Board hereby finds no impact.

Facts in Support of Findings. The facts described above support the finding.

3.13 Hazardous Materials.

3.13.1 Potential Effect: Hazardous Materials. The Parkway would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment and would not require the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials within the study area. Hazardous materials that are stored or used in the corridor of the selected alternative would be removed prior to construction of Placer Parkway. During construction the use of some hazardous materials and generation of some hazardous waste would occur; however, the Parkway would comply with all applicable regulations, and would not result in substantive impacts associated with transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

Hazardous materials are currently used and stored within the study area. It is anticipated that hazardous materials found in the selected corridor would be removed in

accordance with all applicable regulations during initial phases of construction. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

Potential Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) were identified within or adjacent to the Project:

- An uncontrolled dump site in the Western Segment;
- The Tenco Tractor site;
- An uncontrolled dump site in the Central Segment; and
- The Rio Bravo site in the Eastern Segment.

During construction, the potentially hazardous wastes associated with these RECs could be released in the environment. This would be a potentially significant impact.

Trucks would use Placer Parkway. Some trucks and potentially other vehicles would likely be hauling hazardous materials. Accidents involving such vehicles could potentially result in the release of hazardous materials into the environment. The potential for this is similar to most existing facilities of a similar nature, and are not caused by the Parkway other than the fact that it would be in existence. Therefore, impacts associated with the release of hazardous materials into the environment would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

The Parkway would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires. The Parkway would comply with the policies and goals on wildlands and fire safety, outlined in Sutter, Placer, and Sacramento Counties' General Plans. As a result, the impacts are anticipated to be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Tier 1 – Avoidance/Minimization Strategies

- During the development of alternatives, in order to reduce environmental impacts, avoidance alternatives were also considered. These alternatives did not meet the Project Purpose and Need and were therefore eliminated from further consideration.

Tier 2 – Consultation

- The Project Proponent would continue to coordinate with local jurisdictions in Tier 2 to reduce the likelihood of impacts related to the presence of hazardous

materials. Coordination would include development of specific design details to minimize impacts such as the location of the roadway footprint within the approved corridor, and consultation regarding the design and location of other planned and proposed developments in the study area.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Commitments

- All buildings and other structures proposed for demolition would be surveyed for the presence of lead based paint (LBP) and asbestos-containing materials (ACM). Any such LBP and/or ACM should be appropriately abated by a certified contractor prior to demolition and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

- Potentially impacted soils proposed for excavation associated with potential RECs, e.g., Tenco Tractor, Rio Bravo Power Plant, and three uncontrolled dump sites, will be tested for appropriate analytes and handled in accordance with regulatory standards.

- Current agricultural soils and former undisturbed agricultural soils that are proposed for excavation during construction will be tested for pesticides and other contaminants and disposed of in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

- A Health and Safety Plan will be prepared by the contractor prior to construction. This plan will describe appropriate procedures to follow in the event that any contaminated soil or groundwater is encountered during construction activities. Any unknown substances should be tested, handled, and disposed of in accordance with appropriate federal, state, and local regulations.

Tier 2 – Mitigation Considerations

- The Parkway should be located, if feasible, so as to avoid disturbance of the potential RECs (see Section 4.15.4.3 of the EIR).

- An aerially deposited lead (ADL) investigation should be conducted along unpaved shoulders adjacent to highways and roads in high traffic areas that will be disturbed during construction activities. The only locations where traffic is heavy enough to warrant an ADL investigation (when peak monthly Average Daily Traffic exceeded 10,000 vehicles in 1985; 1985 was the last year when leaded gasoline was sold in the United States) would be the intersections of the Parkway and SR 65 in the east and SR 70/99 in the west; Caltrans will likely have completed an ADL site investigation at the above intersections a few years before the Parkway is constructed (Chadha, 2006).

3.14 Energy.

3.14.1 Potential Effects: Energy Use. The Project will utilize energy on a one-time basis during construction. Energy use as a function of vehicle miles traveled would increase slightly with the Project. This increase would be at least partially offset by the reduction in travel under congested conditions. Impacts would be less than significant. No mitigation is warranted.

Findings. The Board hereby makes finding 1.

Facts in Support of Findings. The mitigation measures and other facts described below support the finding that this potential impact is not significant, or will be mitigated below a level of significance.

- Estimated fuel consumption does not substantially differ between build alternatives, or between the No-Build Alternative and the build alternatives. Furthermore, this Tier 1 analysis does not take into account the reduction in fuel use due to substantial reduction in congestion associated with all build alternatives; energy use under the build alternatives is likely overstated as compared to the No-Build Alternative.

Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Measures to reduce energy consumption during construction could include limiting the idling of construction equipment and employee vehicles, encouraging carpooling or van pools among construction workers, and locating construction staging areas as close as possible to work sites. Any transportation control measures to reduce traffic volumes and congestion also would decrease energy consumption.

4.0 FINDINGS REGARDING ALTERNATIVES.

As described in more detail later, the Project is the selection of Alternative 5 with a no access buffer. The Project is an alternative that meets the Purpose and Need and was also found by the USCOE and U.S. EPA to be the alternative most likely to contain the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). For the reasons described later in these Findings and in Section 2.5 of the EIR, the Board finds that the alternatives other than Alternative 5, and the alternatives discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIR, are infeasible or otherwise not environmentally superior to Alternative 5.

The analysis in the EIS/EIR considers five corridor alternatives and one no-build alternative at an equivalent level of detail. In addition, a wide range of possible alternatives was considered through the studies conducted over the last fifteen years and more recently, through the Project Study Report ("PSR") process and modification to the PSR alternatives; four landowner identified alternatives were also evaluated. A range of avoidance alternatives was also considered, including avoidance alternatives evaluated through the modified NEPA/404 Process, including a Transportation System Management Alternative ("TSM") , a shorter Parkway, and a shorter Parkway plus TSM. In addition, a Land Use and Policy Scenario was analyzed. This was a theoretical scenario that would reduce travel demand through an enhanced smart growth program using improved land use and transportation policies.

The range of alternatives considered for evaluation, the range of alternatives evaluated in the Technical Reports, and the range of alternatives further evaluated in the EIR are well documented in the following technical reports: Analysis of TSM Alternative (DKS, 2004); Analysis of Shorter Parkway Alternative (DKS, 2004); Analysis of Shorter Parkway Plus TSM Alternative (DKS, 2005) and Analysis of Land Use and Policy Scenario (DKS, 2007), and in Chapter 2 of the EIR. The process by which the alternatives were considered, analyzed, and selected occurred over the course of several years and in collaboration with resource and transportation agencies. The alternatives analyzed in the EIR constitute a reasonable range of alternatives.

4.1 <u>Overview of Standards For Determining a Reasonable Range of Alternatives</u>.

CEQA requires that EIRs examine feasible mitigation measures and feasible alternatives to a proposed project. An important element of any EIR is the selection of which alternatives warrant detailed review in the document.

In any environmental review, the lead agency must determine the range of alternatives to be examined. As the California Supreme Court has found, "both the California and the federal courts have . . . declared that the "statutory requirements for consideration of alternatives must be judged against the rule of reason." The Court further noted that "these statutory and judicial concepts are carried forward in the [CEQA] Guidelines":

> "[An EIR must describe] a reasonable range of alternatives to the project or to the location of the project, which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." (CEQA Guidelines 15126 subd. (d)).

Laurel Heights Improvements Assn. v. The Regents of the University of California (1988) 47 Cal.3d 376, 400.)

It is important to note that the range of alternatives is defined by those alternatives "which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project . . . ." (emphasis added.) Accordingly, in determining the scope of the alternatives analysis and the reasonable range of alternatives, the alternatives analysis in the EIR for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project was framed by the Project objectives/purposes identified for Placer Parkway in the course of its planning history and in relation to the sub-regional and regional planning framework summarized in the EIR and in the Statement of Overriding Considerations attached hereto.

Not only must the range of alternatives reflect those alternatives capable of attaining the basic objectives of the project, but the alternatives must also comprise actions that can feasibly be implemented. The California Supreme Court has noted that "in determining the nature and scope of alternatives to be examined in an EIR, . . . local agencies shall be guided by the doctrine of 'feasibility'." *Citizens of Goleta Valley v. Bd. of Supervisors* (1990), 52 Cal.3d 553, 565. As defined in CEQA, the term "feasibility" involves an assessment of whether the mitigation measures and alternatives are "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, social and technological factors." Accordingly, the alternatives summarized in this document (and addressed in detail in the EIR) are those that have been determined to be "feasible" relative to the definition set forth in the environmental statutes and regulations and in relation to the regional and sub-regional transportation planning context.

Transportation projects must be considered within a regional and sub-regional planning context rather than viewing projects in isolation. In particular, a project of the scale of the Placer Parkway must be viewed in relation to regional and sub-regional planning objectives so that project alternatives can be related to identified public policy goals both for purposes of defining the range of the alternatives to be examined (e.g. alternatives to the Project itself) and to the type of alternatives to be reviewed in detail in the environmental document (e.g., alternative alignments in specific links to avoid or lessen direct environmental impacts).

4.2 Purpose and Need.

4.2.1 Need for Placer Parkway

Need to Preserve Right-of-Way: The Project vicinity includes some of the fastest growing communities in the Sacramento Metropolitan region—Roseville, Rocklin, Lincoln, and the Sunset Industrial Area. SACOG projects that the population in southwestern Placer County will nearly double between 2000 and 2025. Employment in the SR 65 high-technology corridor is expected to grow even faster than the population. The anticipated development to support this increased population and employment will dramatically increase travel demand over the next 20 years and beyond. The study area has been under intense development pressure. While the current economic climate has slowed the pace of this development pressure, at least two major Specific Plans have been approved within the last year (Regional University – December 2008 and Sutter Pointe – June 2009) and others are proceeding through environmental review. Based

on the number of recent applications or pre-application submittals, and interest by the development community, it is apparent that it will become increasingly difficult and expensive to identify an appropriate corridor as a solution that meets the ultimate purpose of the Project. Failure to preserve a corridor as soon as feasible could result in potentially increased costs and greater environmental impacts because ongoing planning for development could result in approved projects that would foreclose opportunities for locating the roadway in areas that would minimize environmental impacts, leading to substantially higher mitigation costs.

Travel Demand and Anticipated Congestion: The anticipated population growth in south Sutter County, southwestern Placer County, and northern Sacramento County will dramatically increase travel demands over the next 20 years and beyond. Travel speeds/times from Placer County to both Sacramento and Sutter counties are projected to deteriorate over the next 20 years, even with improvements to local roadways already identified in local general plans.

Job Growth and Goods Movement: The Interstate 80 (I-80) corridor is the major trans-Sierra roadway in northern California accommodating the movement of goods and services. The combined increase of vehicles used for the movement of goods and services as well as passenger vehicles has led to increased congestion, which in turn increases travel times in the study area and competition for roadway capacity. Congestion on the regional roadways connecting Placer County with Sutter and Sacramento counties will adversely impact access to jobs. The projected increase in travel times will affect the movement of goods and people, and will have an impact on the region's economy. The high-technology industry in the SR 65 corridor, plus development of the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, requires dependable access to airports to move high-value/time-critical freight. Thus, direct and convenient access and reliable travel times to both the Sacramento International Airport and the Lincoln Regional Airport are very important to this growing regional job center.

4.2.2 Purpose of Placer Parkway

The goal of the Tier 1 phase of the Project is to preserve a right-of-way for a transportation facility that contributes to the ultimate project purpose described above. Specific objectives are described below.

Preserving Right-of-Way: The purpose of the Project is to preserve right-of-way for a new or upgraded east-west connector between SR 65 and SR 70/99 serving cities and unincorporated areas across southwestern Placer County and south Sutter County.

Responding to Existing and Anticipated Travel Demand: Placer Parkway would be designed to reduce pressure on the existing transportation network and to address anticipated future congestion on the local roadway system in southwestern Placer County and south Sutter County. The Project would be designed to reduce total vehicle hours traveled during the morning and evening peak commute periods (i.e., 6 to 9 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m.), reduce the amount and duration of travel that is spent in congested conditions in southwestern Placer County, and improve travel times between the SR 65 corridor and SR 70/99 by maintaining a

travel speed at or near the free flow speed of the Parkway, which on a freeway reflects Level of Service (LOS) C to D conditions.[3]

Providing Access to the Regional Transportation System in Areas Planned or Projected for Job Growth: Placer Parkway would be designed to improve regional accessibility for businesses and jobs in the Project vicinity, including access to SR 70/99. The Parkway is proposed to serve major travel flows from SR 65 to (1) the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan area, (2) Sacramento International Airport, (3) Sacramento County, and (4) the Interstate 5 (I-5) corridor.

4.3 Regional Transportation Planning Context For Alternatives Development.

Individual transportation projects function within a larger transportation network of existing and planned facilities and programs. The Sacramento Area Council of Governments ("SACOG") is responsible for preparing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), which guides and prioritizes all of SACOG's programming decisions for transportation investments over the next 28 years by linking transportation, land use, and air quality. The MTP 2035 builds on the Blueprint Preferred Growth Scenario (below), which visions more housing and transportation choices and promotes a more compact urban form for the Sacramento Region in 2050. Transit, highway, local roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian investments are all included in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement program (MTIP). This lists short-term surface transportation projects contained in the MTP 2035. The Project, future Tier 2 environmental review, and future Parkway are all in the MTP 2035 and its Final EIR. They are listed in the 2009/12 MTIP as:

- PLA20720 Placer Parkway Environmental Studies
- PLA25299 Placer Parkway Tier 2 EIS/EIR
- PLA20721 Placer Parkway Project

Sacramento Area Council of Governments — Blueprint

SACOG recently adopted the Preferred Scenario developed through the Blueprint Transportation and Land Use Study. The Preferred Blueprint Scenario (see Section 2.6.2 of the EIR for more details) establishes a long-range regional vision for how the six-county SACOG region will manage an anticipated doubling of population by the year 2050. Many of the strategies that were discussed by participants in the Blueprint planning process called for the implementation of what are known as the Blueprint Planning Principles. These Planning

[3] LOS is a qualitative measure of the effect of a number of factors which include speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom to maneuver, safety, driving comfort/convenience, and operation costs. LOS is designated A through F, from best to worst, covering the entire range of traffic operations that might occur. LOS E describes conditions approaching or at maximum capacity. Free-flow speed and LOS C and D conditions on a freeway do not preclude an alternative based on expanding existing roads, a non-freeway facility, a Transportation System Management Alternative, a shorter Parkway Alternative, or a combination of the aforementioned.

Principles include housing options, compact development, transportation choices, mixed land uses, conservation of natural resources, making better use of existing assets, and quality design.

Placer Parkway is recognized as an element of the Preferred Scenario, and it is shown as part of the assumed future transportation network in the Preferred Scenario. PCTPA is the regional transportation planning agency for Placer County jurisdictions (except for the portion of the county within the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency). PCTPA is responsible for preparing the Placer County Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is a long-range (20-year) transportation plan for the regional transportation system, including the study area. The RTP also contains the adopted goals, policies, programs, and projects to meet regional mobility needs and satisfy federal air quality standards. The 2027 Placer County RTP includes the following Goal and Policy that pertain to Placer Parkway:

Goal 1. Highways/Streets/Roadways: Maintain and upgrade a safe, efficient, and convenient countrywide roadway system that meets the travel needs of people and goods through and within the region.

Policy 3. Establish a funding/implementation strategy for the Placer Parkway, a connector between State Route 65 and State Routes 70 and 99, including access to the Interstate 5 corridor in northern Sacramento County and the Sacramento International Airport.

PCTPA is also responsible for preparing the Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP). The RTIP contains the list of projects that will be submitted to the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) for incorporation into the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

The Project is identified in the PCTPA 2027 RTP and is intended to implement a project that has been included in the approved RTP for many years. The RTP lists the Project with the same MTP 2035 project identifiers.

4.4 Development of Project Alternatives.

As described in section 1.4 of these Findings, the Project has been under review, in some manner, for the last 15 years. During the last six years, more detailed studies were completed, and a scoping process was conducted, which led to the determination of the alternatives to study in the EIR and to the Draft, Partially Revised Draft and Final EIRs. Thus, the alternatives were developed and analyzed over several years, through an extensive technical and public outreach process and through a federal coordination process, as summarized in Section 1.4 of these Findings.

4.4.1 Alternatives Considered But Eliminated From Further Review.

A number of alternatives were considered in early phases of Project development. Input from local citizens, three Project advisory groups, local jurisdictions, state and regional agencies, along with a number of federal agencies including the USCOE and U.S. EPA, and

other interested organizations and individuals, all of which were considered and incorporated into alternatives development.

The development of alternatives considered for study in the EIR occurred within the context of the planning process described above. As identified below, alternatives were considered, evaluated, and rejected or modified:

1. **PSR Alternatives**: Early screening was initiated in the Conceptual Plan/Placer Parkway Interconnect Study and developed in more detail in the PSR, which resulted in the PSR Alternatives;

2. **Modification of the PSR Alternatives**: The PSR Alternatives were modified based on screening and preliminary evaluation that focused on avoidance of environmental resources, with special focus on aquatic resources, and including input from the advisory committees and the public;

3. **Alternatives Eliminated for Reasons Related to Purpose and Need, Safety, and/or Environmental Considerations**;

4. **Avoidance Alternatives – Modified NEPA/404 Process**: Evaluation of various alternatives that would avoid or reduce the need to construct a Parkway, through participation in a modified NEPA/404 process with federal agencies; and

5. **Landowner-Identified Alignments**: Evaluation of alignments identified by a landowner were conducted.

Based on public comments, environmental and engineering constraints, safety, or an inability to meet the purpose and need of the Project, several alternatives were eliminated from further consideration. Details are provided in Section 2.5 of the EIR.

4.4.2 NEPA/404 Process with Federal Agencies.

As described in section 1.4 of these Findings, a federal coordination process (a modified NEPA/404 process) was conducted to reach concurrence on several key points, including the range of alternatives and the alternative most likely to contain the LEDPA. Subsequent to circulation of the Draft and Partially Revised Draft EIRs, SPRTA worked with the federal resource agencies to reach concurrence on the alternative most likely to contain the LEDPA to ensure that Tier 1 decisions reflect careful consideration of the 404(b)(1) Guidelines (40 CFR 230), which implement the Clean Water Act. Over the course of six years, including 25 coordination meetings as part of the NEPA/404 process, the federal and local agencies worked to address issues including the relationship of the Parkway to growth in the area. This process achieved identification of the alternative most likely to contain the LEDPA and concurrence on the mitigation framework. The modified NEPA/404 process (Memorandum of Understanding, concurrence letters, and meeting summaries) is included in the Final EIR Appendix A.

4.5 Comparison of the Alternatives.

To determine the Environmentally Superior Alternative, all alternatives were evaluated on a co-equal basis with respect to their ability to avoid or substantially lessen significant environmental effects or provide meaningful differences in less-than-significant impacts, and their ability to meet the purpose and need for the Project.

This analysis evaluated the No-Build Alternative, followed by the build alternatives. Build alternatives were considered in two ways. First, system-wide impacts—traffic, air quality, noise and energy—were evaluated. These are impacts that are a function of traffic movements, including vehicles miles traveled and vehicle hours of delay attributable to an alternative by virtue of where it connects to the State Routes and where other interchanges would occur. Such impacts have a broader impact that can be identified within a specific geographic segment, and extend beyond the Project study area.

Second, the analysis considered impacts on environmental resources by geographic segment, where such impacts can be quantified. This is useful because it provided a clear focus on differences among alternatives: there were two alignments in the Western Segment, five alignments in the Central Segment, and one alignment in the Eastern Segment. This segment analysis therefore focused on the differences between a SR 70/99 connection one-half mile north of Riego Road or at Sankey Boulevard, and differences among alternatives in the Central Segment.

4.5.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative would result in significant traffic congestion, and would not meet the purpose and need for the Project. It is estimated that the No-Build Alternative would result in slightly fewer VMTs than any of the build alternatives (less than 1 percent fewer in 2020 and less than 2 percent fewer in 2040). It would, however, result in substantially more vehicle hours of delay (VHD) in congested conditions as compared to the build alternatives, ranging from 3.34 to 6.07 percent in 2020 and from 5.24 to 6.98 in 2040 in the TASA, and from 10.19 to 24.04 percent in 2020 and from 15.62 to 20.67 in 2040 in the AFA.

Projected air quality under the No-Build Alternative would exceed air quality standards, but with smaller exceedances than the build alternatives when considering only VMT. It is likely that the increase in VHD as compared to the build alternatives would result in worse air quality conditions than those quantified in this Tier 1 level of analysis. Under the No-Build Alternative, energy would not be consumed during construction. During the more congested conditions expected in the future without the Parkway, energy consumption per vehicle would be expected to increase, in correlation with the greater VHD that would occur.

The No-Build Alternative would avoid many of the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts of the Project such as impacts on land use and farmlands; visual, cultural and biological resources; noise; and growth. Impacts that are cumulatively significant would remain significant with or without the Parkway. In particular, the assumed increase in VMT and VHD under the No-Build Alternative is in large part associated with the cumulative impact scenario.

The Project study area and surrounding vicinity are in one of the fastest growing areas in the six-county SACOG region. SACOG's 2050 growth plan – the Blueprint – is a nationally-recognized smart- (compact) growth strategy, which targets southern and western Placer and Sutter counties for a significant amount of growth. Large-scale planned (approved) and proposed developments are being considered regardless of whether the Parkway is built or not.

4.5.2 System-Wide Impacts of Build Alternatives

For system-wide impacts, both opening year (2020) and cumulative year (2040) impacts were considered. This analysis focused on significant impacts that cannot be mitigated below a level of significance.

Alternative 1 – the Red Alternative

Alternative 1 is the southernmost build alternative and would connect to SR 70/99 at the north of Riego Road interchange.

Alternative 1 would result in significant conversion of farmland, result in potential incompatibility with proposed land uses, conversion of lands under Williamson Act contracts, and inconsistency with applicable General Plan policies.

Alternative 1 would increase VMT over conditions without the Project by 0.68 percent and 1.7 percent in 2020 and 2040, respectively. The increase in VMT among all build alternatives differs by less than one-quarter of 1 percent; Alternative 1 would have the smallest increase in VMT of all build alternatives. Alternative 1 would decrease VHD during LOS D, E, and F conditions without the Project by 4.17 to 6.07 percent in the TASA and by 11.66 to 24.04 percent in the AFA, depending on the LOS and the analysis year. The decrease in VHD among all build alternatives ranges from 0.83 to 1.77 percent in the TASA, and from 0.65 to 3.16 percent in the AFA, depending on the LOS and the analysis year. Alternative 1 would have the largest decrease in VHD of all build alternatives.

In 2020, Alternative 1 would reduce traffic congestion on most local roadways as compared to the 2020 condition without the Project. It would increase traffic congestion on SR 70/99 between I-5 and Elkhorn Boulevard and on SR 65 between Placer Parkway and the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass, contributing more traffic to those locations than would occur without the Project. In 2040, Alternative 1 would contribute to a cumulatively significant impact on the following roadways: SR 70/99 between I-5 and Elkhorn Boulevard; SR 65 between I-80 and the SR 65 Lincoln Bypass; Sierra College Boulevard between the future Valley View Parkway and English Colony Way; Valley View Parkway, and Whitney Ranch Road between SR 65 and University Avenue.

In 2020 and 2040, Alternative 1, like all the alternatives, would exceed the FRAQMD significance thresholds for ROG and NO_X; in 2040 Alternative 1 would exceed the PCAPCD significance threshold for CO and for NO_X, as would all the alternatives. Alternative 1 would generate the least amount of criteria pollutant emissions, although differences among build alternatives are less than 2 percent.

Alternative 1 (along with the No-Build Alternative and Alternative 4) would have the fewest projected noise impacts in 2020, but not in 2040. It would have the lowest energy consumption in terms of estimated fuel consumption in both 2020 and 2040.

There is no substantive difference in growth inducement, resulting in secondary and indirect impacts, among the build alternatives.

In addition, this Alternative is not consistent with the SPSP land use/circulation plan. Therefore this Alternative is less responsive to the Project Purpose of advancing economic development.

Alternative 2 – the Orange Alternative

Alternative 2 would connect to the SR 70/99 at the north of Riego Road interchange and cross diagonally across the Central Segment of the study area. Alternative 2 would increase VMT over conditions without the Project by 0.84 and 1.9 percent in 2020 and 2040, respectively. Alternative 2 would decrease VHD during LOS D, E, and F conditions over conditions without the Project by 3.98 to 5.58 percent in the TASA and by 11.16 to 24.04 percent in the AFA, depending on the LOS and the analysis year. Impacts related to traffic congestion on local roadways and freeways would be similar to Alternative 1.

Air quality impacts under Alternative 2 would be similar to and slightly greater than Alternatives 1 and 5. Noise impacts would be greatest under Alternative 2 (along with Alternative 3) in 2020 and 2040 (along with Alternatives 1 and 3). Alternative 2 would have the second highest energy consumption in 2020, and the third highest in 2040.

In addition, this Alternative is not consistent with the SPSP land use/circulation plan. Therefore this Alternative is less responsive to the Project Purpose of advancing economic development.

Alternative 3 – the Blue Alternative

Alternative 3 would connect to SR 70/99 at the north of Riego Road interchange and would cross the Central Segment north of the proposed Regional University and Community Specific Plan area. Alternative 3 would increase VMT over conditions without the Project by 0.92 and 1.94 percent in 2020 and 2040, respectively. Alternative 3 would have the largest increase in VMT of all build alternatives. Alternative 3 would decrease VHD during LOS D, E, and F conditions over conditions without the Project by 3.6 to 6.18 percent in the TASA and by 10.59 to 19.42 percent in the AFA, depending on the LOS and the analysis year. Impacts related to traffic congestion on local roadways and freeways would be similar to Alternative 1.

Air quality impacts under Alternative 3 would be similar to Alternative 4. Alternative 3 would generate the greatest amount of air pollutant emissions among all build alternatives. Noise impacts would be greatest under Alternative 3 (along with Alternative 2) in 2020 and 2040 (along with Alternatives 1 and 2). Alternative 3 would have the highest energy consumption of all alternatives in both 2020 and 2040.

In addition, this Alternative is not consistent with the SPSP land use/circulation plan. Therefore this Alternative is less responsive to the Project Purpose of advancing economic development.

Alternative 4 – the Yellow Alternative

Alternative 4 would connect to SR 70/99 at the Sankey Road interchange and would cross the Central Segment north of the proposed Regional University and Community Specific Plan area. Alternative 4 would increase VMT over conditions without the Project by 0.82 and 1.92 percent in 2020 and 2040, respectively. Alternative 4 would decrease VHD during LOS D, E, and F conditions over conditions without the Project by 3.34 to 5.52 percent in the TASA and by 10.19 to 17.51 percent in the AFA, depending on the LOS and the analysis year. Alternative 4 would have the smallest reduction in VHD of all build alternatives. Impacts related to traffic congestion on local roadways and freeways would be similar to Alternative 1.

Air quality impacts under Alternative 4 would be similar to and slightly greater than Alternative 2 in 2040. Alternative 4 (along with the No-Build Alternative and Alternative 1) would have the fewest projected noise impacts in 2020, and also in 2040 (along with Alternative 5). Alternative 4 would have the second lowest energy consumption in 2020, but the second highest in 2040.

The Project (Alternative 5) – the Green Alternative

Alternative 5 would connect to SR 70/99 at the Sankey Road interchange and would cross the Central Segment slightly to the north of Alternative 4. Alternative 5 would increase VMT over conditions without the Project by 0.84 and 1.84 percent in 2020 and 2040, respectively. Alternative 5 would decrease VHD during LOS D, E, and F conditions over conditions without the Project by 3.34 to 6.38 percent in the TASA and by 10.11 to 18.38 percent in the AFA, depending on the LOS and the analysis year. Impacts related to traffic congestion on local roadways and freeways would be similar to Alternative 1.

Air quality impacts under Alternative 5 would be similar to and slightly less than Alternatives 2-4. Noise impacts would be greater than under Alternatives 1 and 4 in 2020 and the least in 2040 (along with Alternative 4). Alternative 5 would have the third lowest energy consumption of all alternatives in 2020, and the second lowest in 2040.

The benefits of the Project are described in detail in the Statement of Overriding Considerations, Section 5.0 of this Findings document.

Selection of the Project represents a coordinated balanced approach to minimizing harm to both the natural and built environments. The Project culminates years of analysis and evaluation, engineering refinement, inter-agency consultation and coordinated consensus. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently issued their concurrence that the Project is the Corridor most likely to contain the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative ("LEDPA").

After consideration of the public and agency comments received on the Draft EIR and ongoing coordination with federal, State and local resource/regulatory agencies, a Project

was identified from the alternatives. Alternative 5 with a no access buffer is the corridor alignment alternative identified by SPRTA as the Project.

With respect to direct impacts, Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 would have substantially more impacts than Alternatives 4 or 5. Alternatives 4 and 5 are generally similar, except that Alternative 4 has fewer direct impacts to potentially bisected parcels, homes and farmsteads, and to vernal pool complexes than Alternative 5, and Alternative 5 has fewer direct impacts to Swainson's hawk and white-tailed hawk foraging habitat, farmlands and wetlands, and it is the least archeologically sensitive alignment.

Additional key factors favoring Alternative 5 over Alternative 4 and leading to the selection of Alternative 5 with a no access buffer as the Project include the following:

- Alternative 5 has less potential for inducing growth.
- Alternative 5 has the least potential for secondary and indirect impacts on biological resources, including the lowest potential for habitat fragmentation.
- Alternative 5 is most consistent with the regional habitat conservation plan PCCP being developed by Placer County.
- Alternative 5 is the shortest alternative, which limits its potential direct effects and construction costs.
- Local jurisdictions support Alternative 5.

Through the modified NEPA/404 process (described in Section 1.4 of these Findings) and specifically concurrence that the Project is the corridor most likely to contain the LEDPA, a conservation framework was identified to further refine the general mechanisms to limit new interchanges in the no-development buffer zone (identified in Draft EIR Section 2.2.4) in portions of the Project area's Western and Central Segments. This refinement is to be applied to an approximate 5.1- mile long segment (from the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal to a point approximately 3,250 feet west of the Reason Farms Retention Basin's 'panhandle'). See Figure A-1 in the Final EIR.

This conservation framework focuses on the use of a conservation easement to be implemented during the Tier 2 stage to further help preclude new interchanges and help preserve agricultural and open space lands. The attributes of the easement would include the following:

- The easement will be in the form of a conservation easement created pursuant to California Civil Code Section 815.
- The easement will be perpetual in duration. The no-access provision will be binding on successive owners for the purpose of retaining the land predominantly in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested or open-space condition. (Cal. Civ. Code §§815.1, 815.2.).

- An instrument creating the conservation easement will be recorded in the county where the land is located. (Cal. Civ. Code §815.5.)

- The easement will be held by a tax-exempt nonprofit organization qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and qualified to do business in California which has as its primary purpose the preservation, protection, or enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, forested, or open-space condition or use.

- If the easement will not be accepted by such non-profit organization, or if the organization is no longer able to hold the easement, the first priority shall be to convey it to a federal agency or to a state government entity such as the California Department of Fish and Game. Failing that, the NEPA/404 agencies will work together through the NEPA/404 process to identify and to concur on an acceptable conservation easement holder.

- The terms of the easement may be enforced in court, and violation of the easement may result in damages, including the cost of restoration.

- Under the Subdivision Map Act, a city or county must generally deny approval of a tentative map if the land is subject to an open-space easement, agricultural conservation easement, or conservation easement.

- The Easement will include a Grantor's covenant not to allow access to right of way from adjacent land, and not to participate in planning or construction of interchange(s) between the highway Project and any surface streets from 3,250 feet west of the western boundary of the Reason Farms Retention Basin panhandle to the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal. The easement is expressly to provide that this covenant is specifically enforceable. The easement may also identify certain third party beneficiaries with the right to enforce covenant.

- The covenant not to allow access will include a specific prohibition regarding interchange structures in the airspace over the property.

For all of the reasons described above, the SPRTA Board hereby finds that (1) the Project is the Environmentally Superior Alternative, (2) that changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the Project to avoid or substantially lessen its significant effects, and (3) specific economic, legal, social, technological considerations make infeasible the other Project alternatives described in the Final EIR. The facts in support of this finding are recited above and are described in greater detail in the Final EIR and in the Statement of Overriding Considerations (Section 5.0).

5.0 STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS.

The EIR indicates that if the Project is constructed,[4] certain significant effects may be unavoidable. However, if the benefits of a proposed project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, the project may be approved in spite of the adverse environmental effects in accordance with CEQA (Public Resources Code section 210002), and CEQA Guidelines section 15093. The Board finds the unavoidable significant effects described in Section 2.0 are acceptable and alternatives with less significant environmental impacts are not preferable as described in Section 4.0, due to the following overriding considerations. The Board also finds that, in addition to the specific infeasibility findings listed throughout this Findings document, many of the Project impacts are inherent in the nature of the Project and it is not feasible to mitigate them further. Short-term construction impacts would occur with any similar public works/infrastructure project. The Project includes extensive mitigation measures, strategies and commitments to reduce the impacts, and this mitigation, in combination with planned regional open space through habitat conservation planning (adopted in Sutter County and in progress in Placer County), will result in protection of significant resources in the Project area.

5.1 Planning Context.

As described in section 4.3 of these Findings, individual transportation projects function within a larger transportation network of existing and planned facilities and programs. The Project is included as an important regional facility on all the relevant regional planning documents, is included as a Plan Line in the Placer County General Plan, and it is included in the Sutter County General Plan as part of the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan.

5.2 Existing and Forecasted Transportation Demand: Need for the Project.

As detailed in the EIR, Section 1, Introduction and Purpose of and Need for Project, and briefly summarized in section 4.2 of these Findings, the Project is needed to reduce pressure on the existing transportation network and to address anticipated future congestion on the local roadway system in southwestern Placer County and south Sutter County. Section 1.4.5, Roadway Operations and Travel Demand, provides details on historical operations of the transportation network in the study area, including I-80, several state routes, and local facilities.

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[4] As explained in Section 1.3, the analysis in these Findings is based on the current action, which is approval of a corridor for preservation, within which the future Placer Parkway will be preliminarily designed, analyzed in a Tier 2 or Project level EIR, and, if pursued after Tier 2 analysis, constructed and operated. The analysis and impact conclusions in the EIR and the Findings address effects of future construction and operation of Placer Parkway as reasonably foreseeable effects of preservation of the roadway corridor, even though the action before the SPRTA Board at this time is limited to preservation of a corridor, which will have only limited environmental impacts.

5.3 Purpose and Need for the Project/Project Objectives.

As part of the federal coordination process described in Section 1.4, in 2005, the federal regulatory agencies and SPRTA developed and concurred with the Purpose and Need Statement provided in the EIR (sections 1.2 and 1.3). FHWA, the federal lead agency for the Placer Parkway EIS/EIR under NEPA, approved this Purpose and Need Statement. This was consistent with the modified NEPA/404 MOU process and relevant federal Clean Water Act and NEPA guidelines (specifically the Purpose and Need section of an EIS [40 C.F.R. section 1502.13] and the overall Project purposes considered by the ACOE [40 C.F.R. Section 230.10(a)(2)].

The CEQA Project objectives are the same as the Purpose and Need statement.

5.4 Project Benefits.

Given the existing and projected growth in and around the study area, it is vital to select a corridor as early as feasible, so that the location of the future Placer Parkway can be considered in local jurisdictions' planning decisions. Also, it is important to select a corridor before new development reduces corridor options or increases right-of-way acquisition costs, notwithstanding current economic conditions. A tiered approach to Parkway planning was selected in order to address these concerns and select a corridor for the Parkway before design and engineering are initiated. The Project meets the Purpose and Need, meeting both local and regional objectives for responding to travel demand and congestion and facilitating jobs growth and goods movement projected to occur as a result of ongoing growth, including the City of Lincoln's Sphere of Influence expansion and the recently approved Sutter Pointe Specific Plan in Sutter County which includes 3,600 acres of employment-generating uses. The Project would increase regional roadway supply and capacity, and it would provide several new interchanges where none exist at present (it would not affect sewer or water infrastructure availability). The new roadway would provide substantial new east-west traffic capacity and have several traffic benefits, listed below.

- Systemwide congestion would be reduced. The Project would decrease projected traffic on many arterial/collector roadway segments in western Roseville, unincorporated portions of west Placer County, and unincorporated portions of south Sutter County. Some locations would experience traffic increases, primarily at the western and eastern ends of the Parkway and near interchanges, but, traffic volumes would decrease at a larger number of roadway segments.

- Many roadways would experience decreases in traffic volumes as a result of Project.

- Compared to the No-Build Alternative, the Project would reduce the amount of Vehicle Miles Traveled on congested roadways, especially in the Analysis Focus Area.

- The Project would reduce vehicle hours of delay in 2020. As shown in detail in Tables 4.8-21 and 4.8-22 of the EIR, when compared to the No-Build Alternative, the Project would decrease vehicle hours of delay for both freeways and arterials, under the three Level of Service thresholds analyzed.

- The Project would substantially reduce vehicle hours of delay by 2040. As shown in detail in Tables 4.8-38 and 4.8-39 of the EIR, when compared to the No-Build Alternative, the Project would decrease vehicle hours of delay by up to 4,000 hours during the 3-hour a.m. and 3-hour p.m. commute periods.

- Placer Parkway would operate at LOS C or better conditions if six lanes are provided.

- Commute time savings for trips from SR 65 to the Sacramento International Airport or downtown could range from 9 to 14 minutes, resulting in commute time savings of 30 percent.

- The Project would provide connectivity and reduce travel time between two major areas planned for job growth, the Sunset Industrial Area Plan and the area zoned Industrial in the Sutter Pointe Specific Plan, thus providing access to the regional transportation system and the Sacramento International Airport. This improvement in regional accessibility for businesses and jobs is one of the purposes of Placer Parkway.

Attachment B:

Resolution Amending the Placer County General Plan

Before the Board of Supervisors
County of Placer, State of California

In the matter of: A RESOLUTION AMENDING THE PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN POLICY DOCUMENT AND CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

Reso. No. _____

The following resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held December 6, 2011, by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

_____
Robert Weygandt, Chairman

Attest:

_____
Ann Holman
Clerk of said Board

WHEREAS, on November 10, 2011, the Placer County Planning Commission ("Planning Commission") held a public hearing to consider amendments to the Placer County General Plan ("General Plan") related to the proposed Placer Parkway Corridor Alignment and the newly constructed Highway 65 Bypass, and the Planning Commission has made recommendations to the Board of Supervisors of Placer County ("Board") related thereto, and

WHEREAS, on December 6, 2011 the Board held a public hearing to consider the recommendations of the Planning Commission and to receive public input regarding the proposed amendments of the Placer County General Plan Policy Document and Circulation Plan Diagram, and

WHEREAS, the Board has reviewed the proposed amendments, considered the recommendations of the Planning Commission and considered any and all written and oral comments submitted by the public thereon and has adopted Resolution No. 2011-_____ making certain determinations and findings in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act relating to use of the Final EIR for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project certified by the South Regional Transportation Planning Authority, and

WHEREAS, the Board finds the amendments to the General Plan will serve to protect and enhance the health, safety and general welfare of the residents of the County as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the Board further finds the proposed General Plan amendments are consistent with other provisions of the General Plan and its related Community and Area Plans, and is in compliance with applicable requirements of State law; and

WHEREAS, notice of all hearings required has been given and all hearings have been held as required by County ordinance and State law; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that the foregoing recitals setting forth the actions of the County are true and correct

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY PLACER that the Placer County General Plan shall be amended as follows: :

1) Amend the Circulation Plan Diagram by adopting the Supplemental Circulation Plan Diagram (Figure I-8), as shown in Attachment A, attached hereto.
2) Amend the original Circulation Plan Diagram as follows:
   a. Delete the following language: This road segment is a possible route being considered for the Highway 65 bypass Route Adoption Study conducted by Caltrans, the route is not considered as adopted or fixed alignment until such time the California Transportation Commission selects the final route.
   b. Update the depiction of the Parkway Alignment on the Plan to be consistent with Alternative 5 selected by the South Placer Regional Transportation Agency in Resolution 2009-07.
3) Amend Table I-6, General Roadway Standards by Functional Class, in the Placer County General Plan Policy Document to add the category "Limited Access Thoroughfares" under Functional Class for the Placer Parkway with a proposed right of way varying between 500 and 1,000 feet, with footnote 1, as shown on Attachment B, attached hereto.

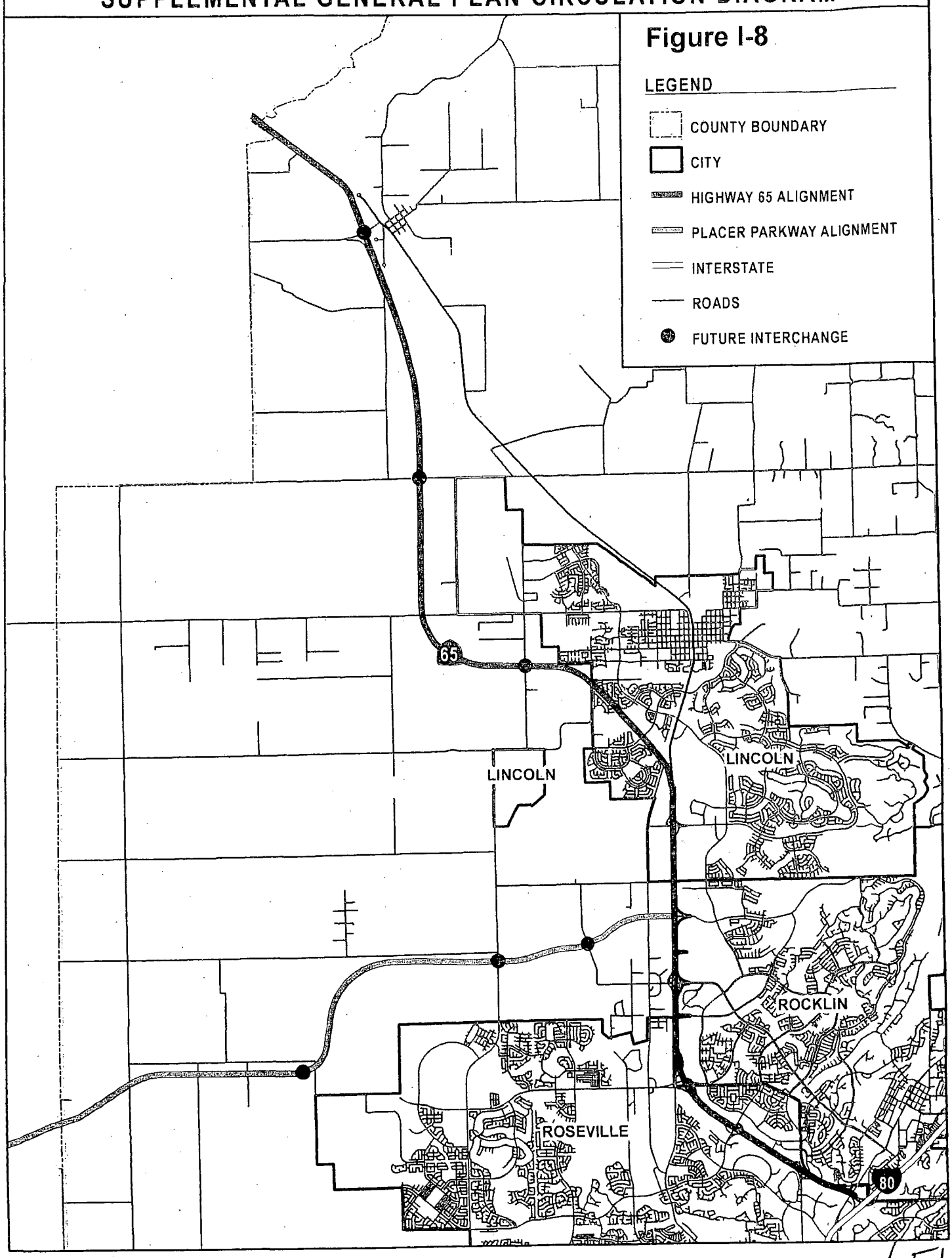
4) Amend Table I-7, Functional Classification by Geographic Area, in the Placer County General Plan Policy Document to add the category "Limited Access Thoroughfares" and designate Placer Parkway as Limited Access Thoroughfare between State Route 65 to Sutter County and add Sheridan Lincoln Boulevard as a Thoroughfare between the City of Lincoln to Sheridan to change the presently existing Highway 65 to a County road, as shown in Attachment C, attached hereto.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Resolution shall take force and become effective immediately.

Attachment C:

Supplemental General Plan Circulation Diagram

SUPPLEMENTAL GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION DIAGRAM



Attachment D:

Amended Tables I-6 and I-7

The post-2010 roadways are located principally in areas not designated for development on the Land Use Diagram. This does not imply an intent to provide this level of road improvements by 2010. The purpose of designating these long-term roadways is to preserve rights-of-ways for these facilities and to plan for their ultimate implementation. This allows Placer County to control setbacks and require offers of dedication of the appropriate width for future roadways in these areas.

TABLE I-6

GENERAL ROADWAY STANDARDS BY FUNCTIONAL CLASS

Functional Class	Access Control: Minimum Intersection/ Interchange Spacing	Access Control: Driveways Allowed	Maximum 2010 Daily Traffic Volumes	Lanes	ROW
State Highways					
Freeways	1-2 miles	None	N/A	4 - 10	--
Conventional		Limited	36,000	2 - 4	--
Urban/Suburban					
Limited Access Thoroughfares	1 - 2 miles	None	N/A	4 - 6	500' – 1000'[1]
Thoroughfares	½ miles	None	N/A	4 - 6	120' - 140'
Major Arterial	1/4 miles	Limited	N/A	4 - 6	96' - 120'
Minor Arterial		Non-Residential	24,000	2 - 4	84' - 96'
Major Collector		Non-Residential	12,000	2	72' - 84'
Minor Collector		All Uses	8,000	2	60' - 72'
Local		All Uses	5,000	2	50' - 60'
Rural					
Limited Access Thoroughfares	1 - 2 miles	None	N/A	4 - 6	500' – 1000'[1]
Arterial		Limited	N/A	2 - 4	70' - 84'
Collector		All Uses	8,000	2	60' - 70'
Local		All Uses	2,000	2	50' - 60'

[1] Row width may be less than or equal to the corridor width indicated in the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation. Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (SPRTA Resolution No. 09-06)

TABLE I-7

FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS
by Geographic Area

Area/Class	Name	Roadway segment
SOUTH PLACER		
State Highway - Freeway	Interstate 80	All
	Route 65	I-80 to Industrial Avenue
State Highway - Arterial	Route 65	Industrial Avenue to Sutter County Line
	Route 193	All
Limited Access Thoroughfares	Placer Parkway	State Route 65 to Sutter County
Thoroughfares	Blue Oaks Blvd Extension	Roseville City limits to Watt Ave Extension
	Foothill Extension	Roseville City limits to Route 65
	Baseline Road	Roseville City limits to Sutter County line
	Sheridan Lincoln Boulevard	City of Lincoln to Sheridan
Urban/Suburban Major Arterials	Douglas Boulevard	Auburn-Folsom Road to Roseville City limits
	Sierra College Boulevard	Sacramento County line to Rocklin City limits
	Sunrise Avenue	Sacramento County line to Roseville City limits
	Auburn-Folsom Road	Sacramento County line to Douglas Boulevard
	Watt Avenue	Sacramento County line to Baseline Road
Urban/Suburban Minor Arterials	Industrial Avenue	Roseville City limits to SR 65
	Auburn-Folsom Road	Douglas Boulevard to Laird Road
	Fiddyment Road	Baseline Road to Sunset Boulevard West
	Barton Road	Sacramento County line to Olive Ranch Road
	East Roseville Parkway	Sierra College Boulevard to Barton Road
	Eureka Road	Roseville City limits to Auburn-Folsom Rd
	Sunset Boulevard	Rocklin City limits to Fiddyment Road
	Watt Avenue Extension	Baseline Road to Blue Oaks Blvd Extension
Urban/Suburban Major Collector	Olive Ranch Road	Cavitt & Stallman to Barton Road
Urban/Suburban Minor Collector	Vineyard Road	Crowder Lane to Roseville City limits
	Crowder Lane	Baseline Road to Vineyard Road
	Joe Rodgers Road	Auburn-Folsom Road to Douglas Boulevard
Rural Arterials	Nicolaus Road	Sutter County line to Lincoln City limits
	Fiddyment Road	Sunset Boulevard West to Moore Road
	Sunset Blvd West	Fiddyment Road to Sutter County line
	Laird Road	Loomis Town limits to Auburn-Folsom Road
	Auburn-Folsom Road	Auburn City limits to Laird Road
	Barton Road	Olive Ranch Road to Loomis City limits
	Wise Road	Mt. Vernon Road to Route 65
	McCourtney Road	Camp Far West Road
	Moore Road	Fiddyment Road to SR 65
	Whitney Boulevard	West end to Roseville City limits