

4.11 TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

4.11.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

EXISTING TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

Hyampom Road is the only all-weather access to the community of Hyampom, thereby making it the only school bus and mail route. It is also a key part of the local transportation system serving portions of Trinity County and the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The County Road connects with State Highway 3 (SR 3), several forest access roads, the community of Hyampom and public roads and private driveways. Hyampom road is classified by the County as a major collector. It is also a designated Federal Aid Secondary (FAS) route.

Annual average daily traffic (AADT) on Hyampom Road varies from a yearly average of 1024 trips per day at the intersection with SR 3 in Hayfork, to an AADT of 155 near Hyampom, with an AADT of 380 through the project segment (FHWA 2001). Eleven percent of the average daily traffic consists of trucks. Traffic counts along Hyampom Road were recently completed by the Trinity County Department of Transportation at the east end of the project site (Post Mile 6.2), for a week in December 2001. Weekday average daily traffic (ADT) during this time period was 110 vehicles and weekend ADT was 86 vehicles.

Mail is delivered to Hyampom daily along this route. Daily mail runs leave Hayfork at 11:00 a.m. and must return to Hayfork by 1:00 p.m. to connect with the mail delivery trucks leaving Hayfork. During the school year, the school bus also makes daily trips to provide Hyampom residents with access to Hayfork High School. The school bus schedule varies with the school schedule and number and distribution of students, but generally travels from Hyampom to Hayfork between 7:00 and 8:00 a.m., and returns between 3:30 and 4:30 p.m.

From the intersection with State Route 3 in Hayfork to the Seventh Day Adventist School at approximately Post Mile 1.0 there is a posted 25 mph speed limit. There is no posted speed limit on Hyampom Road through the project site. The prevailing speeds vary depending on road condition, width and terrain. The terrain in the project portion of Hyampom Road would be classified as "mountainous", and the prevailing speed in this segment is 22 to 30 mph (FHWA 2001).

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION HAZARDS

The project section of Hyampom Road is a narrow, winding two-lane road, barely 20 feet wide with narrow dirt shoulders. The road traverses very steep terrain and is confined by steep cut banks on one side and steep embankment slopes on the other that drop down to Hayfork Creek. Deficiencies along Hyampom Road include chronic rock falls and slope failures at existing cut slope locations, localized embankment slope failures and slipouts, tight-radius curves that do not meet current design standards,

insufficient lane and shoulder widths, and flooding of the road at the eastern end of the project. The Hayfork Nine Mile Bridge, which was constructed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in 1948, is too narrow to meet current design standards. These deficiencies currently pose transportation hazards along Hyampom Road.

Accident history from 1990 to the present was compiled by Trinity County DOT. No accidents were reported in the portion of Hyampom Road to be rehabilitated by this project (i.e. from Post Mile 6.8 to Post Mile 8.3, including Nine Mile Bridge) during that time period.

FUTURE TRAFFIC PROJECTIONS

Assuming a 2 percent annual traffic growth rate, AADT in 2020 is expected to be 560 trips per day through the project reach (Post Miles 6.8 to 8.3). Near Hayfork (Post Miles 0.0 to 6.5), 1520 trips per day are predicted on Hyampom Road in 2020, while 230 trips per day are predicted for the portion of Hyampom Road approaching Hyampom (Post Miles 9.7 to 14.3) (FHWA 2001).

4.11.2 PLANNING DOCUMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

TRINITY COUNTY GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION ELEMENT

The Trinity County General Plan Circulation Element contains the following applicable goals, objectives, and policies related to traffic and circulation:

- Goal 1: Provide for the long-range development of the County's roadway system that is consistent with adopted land use patterns, ensures the safe and efficient movement of the people and goods, minimizes impacts on the attractiveness of the community, meets environmental and circulation objectives, and implements funding strategies for construction, improvement, and maintenance of existing and new roadways.
 - Objective 1.4: Develop road systems which are compatible with the areas they serve.
 - Policy 1.4A: Motorist safety, emergency vehicle access, roadway use/purpose and climate/weather conditions are all factors that should be considered when existing roads are improved or new roads are developed.
 - Policy 1.4B: Sound engineering judgment shall be used in determining road design and construction in order to reduce long-term maintenance costs.
 - Objective 1.5 Utilize environmental protection/mitigation measures that consider environmental, social, and economic factors when designing, constructing, and operating transportation facilities.
 - Policy 1.5A: Support early consideration of environmental issues in the planning and design of transportation facilities.

- Policy 1.5B: Comply with applicable state and federal environmental laws during the planning and construction of roadway projects.
- Policy 1.5D: Work with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that existing and/or proposed environmental regulations achieve protection of the environment without sacrificing public safety or placing unnecessary restrictions on street and highway projects.
- Policy 1.5E: Ensure that social and economic issues are considered along with the natural and man made environments when environmental review is conducted for proposed projects.
- Policy 1.5F: Work with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure coordination and consistency in the application of environmental regulations.
- Objective 1.15 Achieve scenic roadway designation for appropriate state and county highways/roads.
 - Policy 1.15A: The County Scenic Roadways program will consist of specific right-of-way zoning per the County Scenic Conservation Overlay Zoning District. AT the time that Community Plans or the General Plan Land Use Element are developed or updated, identify appropriate roads (or road segments) to be designated as County Scenic Roadways. Factors to consider include current viewshed condition, resource utilization needs and the need for shaded fuel breaks. Hyampom Road (Road 301) is one of the county roads eligible for designation as a County Scenic Road.
- Objective 1.18: Coordinate plans, programs, and projects for the county, state, and federal transportation systems.
 - Policy 1.18A: Provide state and federal agencies the opportunity to comment on transportation plans and projects proposed by the County, as appropriate.
 - Policy 1.18C: Attempt to develop “partnerships” with Caltrans and other Regional Transportation Planning Agencies when considering large transportation projects with multi-jurisdictional benefits and/or impacts.
 - Policy 1.18D: Consider potential impacts to all components of the transportation system that may result from a proposed project. Require mitigation of identified impacts if the project is to be approved.
- Goal #3: Maintain and upgrade the existing transportation system to prevent costly deterioration, to ensure that efficiency of the system does not decline, to maintain air quality and conserve energy, and to increase mobility and reduce travel time within Trinity County and adjacent regions.
 - Objective 3.1: Use available funds for programs that ensure the most efficient use of existing facilities.
 - Policy 3.1A: Give highest priority to maintenance and protection of existing facilities.

- Policy 3.1B: Examine low-cost alternatives rather than approving costly expansions.
- Objective 3.4: Development of a system of high standard collector and arterial roads to reduce travel time and improve traffic safety within the county, as well as connectors with other regions.
 - Policy 3.4.A: Correct deficiencies in major collector and arterial roads.
 - Policy 3.4.B: Provide for surfaced, all weather roads and streets where year-round public service is needed for education, mail, medical, fire protection, law enforcement and cultural activities.

TRINITY COUNTY REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Trinity County Regional Transportation Plan contains the following goals, objectives, and policies related to traffic and transportation impacts of the proposed project:

- Goal 1.1-Overall Regional Transportation Goal: To provide an effective, balanced and coordinated transportation system, at reasonable costs, consistent with socioeconomic and environmental needs within Trinity County.
- Goal 1.2: To provide a streets-and-highways system (including bridges), which effectively, efficiently, and safely serves the variety of transportation needs in Trinity County.
 - Objective 1.2.1: Pursue highest priority transportation projects first, within the constraints of funding availability and eligibility.
 - Policy 1.2.1.A: Develop projects and allocate transportation revenues available to the County and RTPA, focusing on the following priorities: operation/safety improvements to existing county roads; maintenance of existing county roads; rehabilitation/reconstruction of existing county roads; improvement of existing facilities to increase capacity and reduce congestion; construction of new facilities to relieve congestion (Weaverville); operational/safety improvements to state highways; passing lanes and other capacity improvements to state highways.
 - Policy 1.2.1.B: Seek and/or provide STIP funding for all priority projects within Trinity County prior to supporting projects outside the county.
 - Policy 1.2.1.C: Schedule present and future transportation projects within the limits of fiscal constraints, funding eligibility, and applicable program guidelines/criteria.
 - Objective 1.2.7: Coordinate plans, programs, and projects for the county, state, and federal transportation systems.
 - Policy 1.2.7.A: Provide state and federal agencies the opportunity to comment on transportation plans and projects proposed by the County, as appropriate.
 - Policy 1.2.7C: Attempt to develop “partnerships” with Caltrans and other Regional Transportation Planning Agencies when considering large transportation projects with multi-jurisdictional benefits and/or impacts.

- Policy 1.2.7D: Consider potential impacts to all components of the transportation system that may result from a proposed project. Require mitigation of identified impacts if the project is to be approved.
- Goal 1.3: Coordinate improvement of transportation facilities with adopted land use plans.
 - Objective 1.3.1: Establish consistency and/or linkages between transportation programs and land use plans.
 - Policy 1.3.1.B: Consider the Trinity County General Plan and/or Community Plans when assessing potential transportation projects.
 - Objective 1.3.2: Determine and, as appropriate address the probable land use impacts of transportation projects prior to approving or funding the project.
- Goal 1.4: Maintain and upgrade the existing transportation system to prevent costly deterioration, to ensure that efficiency of the system does not decline and to preserve access into communities for residents and emergency service providers.
 - Objective 1.4.1: Use available funds for programs that ensure the most efficient use of existing facilities.
 - Policy 1.4.1A: Give highest priority to maintenance and protection of existing facilities, following the recommendations developed through the Pavement Management System, and as financially feasible.
 - Policy 1.4.1B: Consider utilizing low-cost alternatives before approving costly expansions.
 - Policy 1.4.1D: Correct deficiencies in major collector and arterial roads.
 - Policy 1.4.1E: Provide for surfaced, all-weather roads where year-round public access is needed into communities for education, mail, medical, fire protection, law enforcement and cultural activities.
- Goal 1.5: Develop street and highway projects that meet environmental, social, economic, and circulation objectives.
 - Objective 1.5.1: Utilize environmental protection/mitigation measures that consider environmental, social, and economic factors when designing, constructing, and operating transportation facilities.
 - Policy 1.5.1A: Support early consideration of environmental issues in the planning and design of transportation facilities.
 - Policy 1.5.1B: Comply with applicable state and federal environmental laws during the planning and construction of roadway projects.
 - Policy 1.5.1D: Work with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that existing and/or proposed environmental regulations achieve protection of the environment without sacrificing public safety or placing unnecessary restrictions on street and highway projects.

- Policy 1.5.1E: Ensure that social and economic issues are considered along with the natural and man made environments when environmental review is conducted for proposed projects.
- Policy 1.5.1F: Work with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure coordination and consistency in the application of environmental regulations.
- Goal 7.1: To coordinate this plan with adopted environmental goals and policies addressed in the Trinity County General Plan and other documents. These goals and policies include, but are not limited to air, water, timber, and land management plans.
- Objective 7.1.1: Support those social, economic, recreational, safety, and service needs of the people in Trinity County which will preserve the quality of life outlined in the County General Plan.
 - Policy 7.1.1A: Support transportation policies and projects which minimize and/or mitigate degradation to environmental quality.
 - Policy 7.1.1C: Assign funding priority to projects which would reduce or eliminate existing environmental impacts.
- Objective 7.1.3: Minimize environmental impacts, project delays, and added costs or procedures for transportation projects through early, continued resource agency consultation and through public involvement.
 - Policy 7.1.3A: At a minimum, meet the legal public notification requirements of state and federal law, as applicable. Whenever feasible, utilize additional measures such as public workshops or newsletters to increase opportunities for public involvement.
 - Policy 7.1.3B: Encourage appropriate transportation and resource agencies to become actively involved in the development and review of projects to as to incorporate environmental considerations into projects from the beginning.

SHASTA-TRINITY NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The proposed action area is included in Management Area 17, Hayfork Creek, and Management Area 19, Indian Valley/Rattlesnake of the Shasta-Trinity National Forests Land and Resource Management Plan (LMP; USDA, 1995). The LMP policies regarding traffic and circulation that relate to the proposed project are as follows:

Applicable Forest Goals related to traffic and circulation include the following:

- Manage the Forests' transportation system to facilitate resource management activities, protect wildlife, meet water quality objectives, and provide recreational access.

Applicable Forest Standards and Guidelines include the following:

- Perform road maintenance activities to meet a variety of management objectives. Not all roads will be maintained every year due to the maintenance level assigned by management, use, and

other factors. Schedule road maintenance activities according to the following priorities (1) to provide for user safety; (2) to meet contractual and legal obligations; (3) to protect natural resources; and (4) to provide an efficient transportation system.

- Assign road maintenance levels to each system road or road segment based on traffic management and use objectives. Maintain all roads to at least Maintenance Level I.
- Construct or reconstruct roads so that a stable road prism is established. This includes road cuts and fills and the road surface. Minimize sedimentation by employing construction practices such as (1) placing surfacing on the roadway; (2) establishing a vegetative cover on slopes; and (3) installing proper drainage structures.
- Use a full range of vegetative management techniques along roads, trails, and transmission corridors with emphasis on non-chemical means.
- Coordinate road improvement and maintenance projects with other Forests, state and local agencies, and cooperators, as needed.
 - Inspect dams and bridges at prescribed intervals and provide the maintenance necessary to keep them safe

There is no supplemental LMP management direction for traffic and circulation within Management Area 17 or Management Area 19.

4.11.3 SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

Appendix G of the CEQA *Guidelines*, the CEQA Environmental Checklist, poses the following questions to be considered in determining whether the project would cause significant transportation/traffic impacts:

Would the project:

- Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?
- Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?
- Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?
- Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature, (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?
- Result in inadequate emergency access?
- Result in inadequate parking capacity?
- Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?

4.11.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

PERMANENT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

As explained further in Chapter 6.0 of this EIR, proposed improvements to a segment of the existing Hyampom Road will not cause an increase in traffic along the road. The project will therefore not result in increase traffic congestion or a decline in the level of service of the roadway. The project will not result in any change in air traffic patterns or alternative transportation.

The project will have a beneficial effect by reducing existing road hazards such as sharp curves and narrow lanes without safe recovery areas. In addition, the safety and reliability of Hyampom Road will be improved by eliminating existing flooding hazards and correcting areas where rocks falling on the road and fill slope failures are common, particularly during winter storms. The design speed of Hyampom Road will not be increased by this project, but lanes will be widened to a consistent width, and turnouts will be provided along the road. Emergency access will also be improved, upon project completion, because the wider lanes and turnouts will provide a means for general traffic to pull over and yield to emergency vehicles, and will also provide roadside staging areas that may be needed during a fire or flood.

Demand for parking within the project area will not increase, because the project does not include facilities requiring parking. The area that is now currently unofficially used for parking for access to the Eight Mile Trail will remain in its current location, as will access to the parking area. The construction of the walkway access to the trailhead will improve hiker safety. This will be a beneficial traffic safety impact.

Long-term impacts of the project on traffic and circulation are therefore all considered beneficial. There will be no permanent adverse impacts on traffic and circulation.

TEMPORARY IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Traffic Impact –1: Construction of the proposed project could result in a temporary increase in traffic on Hyampom Road.

Some additional traffic will result during construction, due to the arrival and departure of construction workers and construction equipment and trucks to and from the site. Between 25 and 45 construction workers are anticipated, depending on the specific activities involved. Equipment will generally be left on site during the entire construction season, or for the entire period it is in use. Some materials needed for road and embankment fills will be generated on site from cut slopes, reducing the need to import fill materials via truck. The increase in traffic during the construction of the project will therefore be relatively minor and short-term. During construction, parking for commuting workers and construction equipment will be provided within the designated construction staging areas.

Significance: Less Than Significant

Mitigation Measures: None Required

Traffic Impact –2: Construction of the proposed project will interfere with access to and from Hyampom and USFS lands.

As explained in the Project Description, Section 3.6.6. *Road Closures*, a pilot car may be used to control one-way traffic whenever at least one lane of Hyampom Road can be open to traffic. However, it will be necessary to completely close Hyampom Road to traffic at times. During these times, the road will be completely closed from approximately 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.; from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; from 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.; and from 4:00 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. during the school year. When school is not in session, the road may be closed for more extended periods in the afternoon, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. During the brief periods when the road is open during the day, traffic will be controlled by pilot cars on a single travel lane through the construction site. This schedule is based on accommodating the current school bus and mail carrier schedules, and may be revised if the school bus or mail carrier schedules change.

Hyampom has a County airport, and there are Forest Service roads from Hyampom to SR 3, SR 36 and SR 299 that are maintained and kept open during the summer months, when major earthmoving activities on Hyampom Road will be occurring. No formal detour will be designated, but local residents and emergency service providers are aware of these alternate routes.

During most of the construction season, the alternate Forest Service routes would be open and clear of snow. During the late fall and early spring, these alternate routes may be snowed in. However, at these times construction will be limited to non-earth disturbing activities, such as retaining wall construction. These activities, such as drilling and pile driving, may require complete road closure occasionally, but can generally be accomplished with controlled traffic over a single lane, and/or will lend themselves to speedy reopening for emergency access.

This adverse effect is considered significant as it relates to emergency vehicles. Mitigation is provided in Section 4.4, *Hazards*, for the potentially significant effect on public safety. However, because there will be alternate accesses available during the construction season, and because the road will be open for portions of every day to accommodate commuters as well as the mail delivery and school bus schedules, the temporary impact on traffic and circulation patterns is not considered a significant effect on the environment.

Significance: Less Than Significant

Mitigation Measures: None Required

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Traffic Impact –3: Construction of the proposed project, combined with other proposed construction projects on Hyampom Road, could result in cumulative traffic impacts for residents of Hyampom and Hayfork and users of USFS lands.

The combined rehabilitation projects on Hyampom Road will result in traffic delays for residents of Hyampom and Hayfork and users of USFS lands for up to six construction seasons.

The proposed project will result in periodic road closures for two construction seasons, probably 2005 and 2006. Before that, another TCDOT project between the SR 3 intersection in Hayfork and the Forest Boundary at Post Mile 3.7 will cause delays during the 2004 construction season. The CFLHD anticipates rehabilitation of the section of Hyampom Road between these two segments (Post Mile 3.7 to 6.8), and major reconstruction of the existing one-lane section west of this project, (Post Mile 8.3 to 14.3) over a two to three year period starting in 2006 or 2007.

At least one lane will be kept open to controlled traffic whenever possible. However, road closures similar to those scheduled for the proposed project will also be necessary on the other TCDOT and CFLHD projects. Expected traffic delays for the projects between Post Mile 0.0 and Post Mile 6.8 are expected to be approximately 30 minutes during curve realignments and widening. Traffic will be restricted to one lane, controlled by flag people or pilot cars (Trinity County Planning Department, 2001). However, longer delays and complete road closures may be necessary at times. The proposed CFLHD project between MP 10 and MP 14 will require complete closure of the road for extended periods of time, since the roadway is already only one lane wide. There is not sufficient room to keep a lane of traffic open, and blasting and large cuts will result in large quantities of debris on the road that would have to be cleared before reopening the road.

As mentioned above, there is a County Airport in Hyampom, and there are several U.S. Forest Service roads connecting Hyampom to SR 3, SR 36 and SR 299. These roads are not winter-maintained (there is no snow removal), but they are usually passable during the construction season (early May to mid-November). There will be no formally designated detour during construction of these projects on Hyampom Road, but local residents are aware of these alternative routes.

Emergency access during these other construction projects on Hyampom Road will be handled similarly to this project, and cumulative impacts on emergency services are discussed and mitigated in Section 4.4, *Hazards*. However, like this project, impacts on routine traffic flow and circulation will be minimized to the extent possible by scheduling road closures to accommodate commuters, mail delivery and school bus schedules. This practice, combined with the fact that alternate routes are available during the construction season, lead to the determination that cumulative effects on traffic, while inconvenient, are not a significant environmental effect.

Significance: Less Than Significant

Mitigation Measures: None Required