

3.12 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

This section identifies applicable regulatory requirements and describes the existing transportation system in the vicinity of the project area. It also evaluates impacts related to the generation of vehicle miles traveled (VMT); bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities; transportation hazards; emergency access; and temporary construction traffic resulting from implementation of the project.

3.12.1 Regulatory Setting

FEDERAL

Federal Highway Administration

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation, provides stewardship over the construction and preservation of the nation's highways, bridges, and tunnels. FHWA also conducts research and provides technical assistance to state and local agencies to improve safety, mobility, and livability and to encourage innovation in these areas. FHWA also provides regulation and guidance related to work zone safety, mobility, and temporary traffic control device implementation.

USDA Forest Service Special Use Permit

Work on transportation facilities (i.e., SR 89 bridge) that occurs on National Forest System lands outside of a highway right-of-way requires a temporary construction special use permit. If structures are proposed outside of the existing highway right-of-way, perfection of the right-of-way may occur.

TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

Among its other roles as a regional planning agency, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) develops the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and establishes thresholds to meet a set of environmental goals and standards. While the RTP acts as a roadmap for achieving the thresholds, TRPA also requires compliance with the Code of Ordinances which is designed to achieve and maintain the thresholds. TRPA continues to possess a unique governance structure in the United States through the California and Nevada bi-state compact.

Thresholds

As prescribed by the Compact, TRPA adopted environmental thresholds in 1982 covering nine resources or topics including air quality which included a VMT-based standard. This standard was originally adopted to address nitrate deposition concerns which, over time improved substantially. As a result, nitrate deposition is no longer a significant contributor to lake clarity issues (TRPA 2021b). In recognition of this, in April 2021, the Governing Board removed the nitrate deposition threshold and replaced it with a new mobility-related threshold under a new category heading:

- ▶ TSC1: Reduce Annual Daily Average VMT Per Capita by 6.8% from 12.48, the 2018 baseline, to 11.63 in 2045. (TRPA 2021)

The new VMT threshold sets forth an efficiency based VMT standard that better aligns with identified policies goals and affords consistency with California and Nevada state policies with respect to greenhouse gas emissions reduction and aligns with and is responsive to meaningful change in the regional land use and the transportation system.

Tahoe Regional Plan

Chapter 3, "Transportation Element," of the Regional Plan includes goals and policies that are intended to establish a safe, efficient, and integrated transportation system that provides quality mobility options for all sectors of the population, supports the region's economic base, enhances quality of life, and maximizes opportunities for environmental benefits. The Transportation Element includes transportation goals, policies, and implementation

measures that address multiple aspects of transportation planning and interact to create a successful multi-modal transportation system.

Regional Transportation Plan

TRPA developed the 2020 Regional Transportation Plan (2020 RTP) as Lake Tahoe's blueprint for a regional transportation system that enhances the quality of life in the Tahoe region, promotes sustainability, and offers improved mobility options for people and goods. The 2020 RTP includes a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), in accordance with California Senate Bill 375, statutes of 2008 (Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act). The SCS demonstrates the region's efforts in meeting per capita greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The 2020 RTP is centered around six goals for the region's transportation system, which include:

- ▶ Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
- ▶ Enhance and sustain the connectivity and accessibility of the Tahoe transportation system, across and between modes, communities, and neighboring regions, for people and goods.
- ▶ Increase safety and security for all users of Tahoe's transportation system.
- ▶ Support the economic vitality of the Tahoe Region to enable a diverse workforce, sustainable environment, and quality experience for both residents and visitors.
- ▶ Provide an efficient transportation network through coordinated operations, system management, technology, monitoring, and targeted investments.
- ▶ Provide for the preservation of the existing transportation system through maintenance activities that support climate resiliency, water quality, and safety.

The contextual information and strategic approach presented in the 2020 RTP is organized by three categories: Visit Tahoe (regional entry and exit travel), Discover Tahoe (recreation travel), and Everyday Tahoe (residential and workforce travel). The 2020 RTP goals and policies draw from stakeholder feedback and align with several existing plans and programs including short- and long-range transit plans of the North and South Shore transit operators, the Coordinated Human Services Plan, the 2016 Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and Safe Routes to School, the 2017 Tahoe-Truckee Plug-In Electric Vehicle Readiness Plan, the 2015 Intelligent Transportation Systems Strategic Plan, and multiple corridor and area plans. Strategies detailed within the 2020 RTP focus on projects and programs that dynamically meet the needs of all roadway users by:

- ▶ offering better travel mode options;
- ▶ creating incentives that spread out the times, places, and ways people travel to improve traffic flow;
- ▶ providing environmentally innovative infrastructure;
- ▶ improving safe and equitable access to the places people want to go; and
- ▶ prioritizing funding for projects that fulfill TRPA objectives in transit, active transportation, transportation demand management, and other programs and directly support identified TRPA transportation performance outcomes.

Goals and Policies

The 2020 RTP includes the following policies related to transportation that are applicable to the project:

GOAL 1: Environment

- ▶ Policy 1.1: Support mixed-use, transit-oriented development, and community revitalization projects that encourages walking, bicycling, and easy access to existing and planned transit stops.

GOAL 2: Connectivity

- ▶ Policy 2.2: Provide frequent transit service to recreational areas, including trailheads and shoreline access points.

- ▶ Policy 2.17: Construct, upgrade, and maintain pedestrian and bicycle facilities consistent with the Active Transportation Plan.
- ▶ Policy 2.18: Accommodate the needs of all categories of travelers by designing and operating roads for safe, comfortable, and efficient travel for roadway users of all ages and abilities, such as pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles.

GOAL 3: Safety

- ▶ Policy 3.6: Design projects to maximize visibility at vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian conflict points. Consider increased safety signage, site distance, and other design features, as appropriate.

GOAL 5: Economic Vitality & Quality of Life

- ▶ Policy 5.3: Encourage collaboration between public lands managers, departments of transportation, transit providers, and other regional partners to support sustainable recreation and multi-modal access to recreation sites.

Code of Ordinances

Changes in VMT as a result of additional development and transferred development, and all changes in project operation are discussed in Section 65.2, "Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Reduction, and Mobility Mitigation Program," of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. Fees are assessed in accordance with 65.2.4.C.1 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances and Section 10.8.5 Mitigation Fees in the TRPA Rules of Procedure (TRPA 2021a) based on an individual project basis for projects that increase VMT. The TRPA Project Impact Assessment (PIA) Guidelines (TRPA 2021b) evaluates a project using in-basin trip lengths. The purpose of the fee program is to ensure that added development contribute their fair share to promote regional mobility and reduce VMT. Temporary activities are governed by TRPA Code Section 2.3.6, and construction projects are required to comply with TRPA's standard conditions of approval.

The TRPA Code of Ordinances provides information as it relates to screening projects from further transportation analysis, standards of significance, VMT metrics, and the overall transportation impact assessment process and requirements. As outlined in TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D, some projects are presumed to result in a less-than-significant VMT impact absent any evidence to the contrary (TRPA 2021a). The following screening criteria are potentially applicable to the project:

- ▶ Projects Generating Low VMT: Projects will be screened from further transportation analysis using the following vehicle miles traveled calculations:
 - 1,300 in-Basin VMT within town centers and the half-mile buffer around them.
 - 715 in-Basin VMT in all other areas.
- ▶ Transportation Projects: Any of the following projects: bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects (excluding mobility hubs).
- ▶ Redevelopment Projects: For projects replacing an existing development or use, the net average daily VMT generation should be considered against the screening criteria. This requires calculating both existing average daily VMT and average daily VMT under the project.

The TRPA Code requires that projects that involve more than 650 daily VMT must describe and evaluate the significance of all impacts in the Initial Environmental Checklist. A project that is not screened out must analyze whether it meets the standard of significance.

Active Transportation Plan

TRPA adopted an update to the Linking Tahoe: Active Transportation Plan (ATP), previously known as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, in March 2016. Subsequently, a technical amendment to the ATP was adopted in October 2018. The ATP presents a guide for "planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining a regional active transportation network that includes innovative infrastructure, support facilities, and awareness programs" (TRPA 2018:1-1). Through a network of complete streets, the ATP promotes safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian movement in an effort to increase quality of life and meet environmental goals. The ATP identifies four primary goals which are listed below.

- ▶ Increase connectivity by completing the active transportation network.
- ▶ Improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- ▶ Increase and support consistent project implementation through technical assistance and funding.
- ▶ Increase encouragement and awareness through implementation of the “5 E’s” (i.e., engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, evaluation).

The ATP also provides several policies and performance measures intended to meet the goals outlined above.

State Route 89 Recreation Corridor Management Plan

The SR 89 Recreation Corridor Management Plan (SR 89 Corridor Plan) was developed by TRPA, USDA Forest Service, and Tahoe Transportation District (TTD) and adopted in September 2020 by TRPA. The SR 89 Corridor Plan sets forth a vision and coordinated set of goals for land managers to work toward (TRPA et al. 2020). The vision for the corridor emphasizes a shift in the way people travel in the area to be more transit-oriented and multi-modal. The SR 89 Corridor Plan recommends several projects across the corridor to achieve specified goals. Specifically, the SR 89 Corridor Plan calls for the development of the following projects for the Meeks Bay Segment of the Tahoe Trail:

- ▶ Develop Tahoe Trail segment within Meeks Bay with grade-separated crossing, if needed; underground powerlines and co-locate technology infrastructure
- ▶ Develop bus stop at Meeks Bay
- ▶ Relocate roadside parking when alternative access is provided through transit and bike options
- ▶ Replace Caltrans bridge and incorporate capacity for wildlife crossing and pedestrian/bike use, including potential grade-separated roadway crossing
- ▶ Formalize emergency turnouts
- ▶ Provide winter recreation access parking
- ▶ Increase technology infrastructure (e.g., Intelligent Transportation Systems [ITS], real-time parking management strategies)

As stated in the SR 89 Corridor Plan, the alignment of the Tahoe Trail through Meeks Bay will be considered as part of the project being analyzed herein.

STATE

California Department of Transportation

Caltrans is responsible for planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the state highway system and ramp interchange intersections. Caltrans is also responsible for highway, bridge, and rail transportation planning, construction, and maintenance.

Environmental planning for transportation improvement projects involving California state highways follow the procedures set forth in the agency’s Standard Environmental Reference and Section V of Guidance for Compliance Environmental Handbook. This guidance is intended for transportation-specific improvement projects where Caltrans operates as the CEQA lead agency but can also be used by other agencies, including local agencies, for ideas supplemental to their own procedures.

Caltrans provides guidance to local agencies on assessing the performance of rural roadways to enhance safety, mobility, accessibility, and productivity under continued use. Caltrans requires transportation permits for the movement of vehicles or loads exceeding the limitations on the size and weight contained in Division 15, Chapter 5, Article 1, Section 35551, of the California Vehicle Code.

California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, Part 6: Temporary Traffic Control

The *California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA-MUTCD), Part 6: Temporary Traffic Control* provides principles and guidance for the implementation of temporary traffic control (TTC) to ensure the provision of reasonably safe and effective movement of all roadway users (e.g., motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians) through or around TTC zones while reasonably protecting road users, workers, responders to traffic incidents, and equipment.

California Highway Design Manual

The California Highway Design Manual was developed by the Caltrans Division of Design to establish uniform policies and procedures to carry out the state highway design functions of Caltrans. Individual chapters may be updated at different times, and design information bulletins and design memoranda may supplement, or even supersede, material within the California Highway Design Manual.

Caltrans Encroachment Permits

An "encroachment" is defined in Section 660 of the California Streets and Highways Code as "any tower, pole, pole line, pipe, pipeline, fence, billboard, stand or building, or any structure, object of any kind or character not particularly mentioned in the section, or special event, which is in, under, or over any portion of the state highway rights-of-way (Caltrans). An encroachment permit must be obtained for all proposed activities related to the placement of encroachments within, under, or over the state highway rights of way. Necessary permits will be defined and sought after bridge and restoration design is completed.

Caltrans Traffic Safety Devices, Traffic Safety Systems Guidance

The Traffic Safety Systems Guidance was updated in March 2019 and prepared by the Division of Traffic Operations to establish uniform practices and guidance for traffic safety systems of Caltrans. Traffic safety systems are highway features designed primarily to reduce the severity of run-off road collisions, prevent errant vehicles from crossing the median, and decelerate errant vehicles (Caltrans 2019). While the District Traffic Safety Office or District Traffic Operations Office is the primary district functional unit responsible for the application of standards and policies for use of traffic safety systems on state highways, the Headquarters Office of Traffic Engineering ensures quality control of those standards and policies, and the Headquarters Traffic Safety Systems Branch Chief has authority over certain standards. The Division of Maintenance ensures the most efficient use of personnel and materials resources for those applications.

Senate Bill 743

Senate Bill (SB) 743, passed in 2013, required the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop new CEQA guidelines that address transportation metrics under CEQA. As stated in the legislation, upon adoption of the new guidelines, "automobile delay, as described solely by LOS or similar measures of vehicular capacity or traffic congestion shall not be considered a significant impact on the environment pursuant to this division, except in locations specifically identified in the guidelines, if any."

OPR published its proposal for the comprehensive updates to the CEQA Guidelines in November 2017 which included proposed updates related to analyzing transportation impacts pursuant to SB 743. These updates indicated that vehicle miles traveled (VMT) be the primary metric used to identify transportation impacts. In December of 2018, OPR published the most recent version of the *Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA* (Technical Advisory) which provides guidance for VMT analysis. The Technical Advisory notes that lead agencies should not truncate any VMT analysis because of jurisdictional or other boundaries, for example, by failing to count the portion of a trip that falls outside the jurisdiction or by discounting the VMT from a trip that crosses a jurisdictional boundary (OPR 2018).

In December 2018, OPR and the California Natural Resources Agency submitted the updated CEQA Guidelines to the Office of Administrative Law for final approval to implement SB 743. The Office of Administrative Law subsequently approved the updated CEQA Guidelines, and local agencies had an opt-in period until July 1, 2020 to implement the updated guidelines. As of July 1, 2020, implementation of Section 15064.3 of the updated CEQA Guidelines apply statewide.

3.12.2 Environmental Setting

This section describes the existing environmental setting, which is the baseline scenario upon which project-specific impacts are evaluated. The environmental setting for transportation includes baseline descriptions for roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities.

ROADWAY SYSTEM

There are four basic types of roadways in the region which include state routes, arterials, collectors, and local/neighborhood streets.

State Highways

Most vehicular travel in the Tahoe region occurs on state highways including U.S. Route (US) 50, SR 28, SR 89, SR 207, SR 267, and SR 431. Most highways are two-lane facilities; however, portions of US 50, SR 28, and SR 89 have wider cross-sections such as four-lane roadways with center two-way left turn lanes. In the project area, SR 89, also known as Emerald Bay Road, is a north-south two-lane highway that runs east of the project area connecting to SR 28 to the north and SR 88 on the southern end. Near the project area, SR 89 has a speed limit of 40 miles per hour, shoulders between 5 and 8 feet wide on either side of the roadway, and no turn pockets or two-way-left-turn lanes.

Arterials

Arterial roadways carry moderate to high traffic volumes to and from local and collector roads to other arterials and highways. Although access to adjacent parcels is more limited from arterials than from collector and local streets, arterial roadways also provide direct access to properties, particularly in commercial areas. There are no arterial roadways within the immediate vicinity of the project area.

Collectors

Collector roadways serve as transition facilities, distributing traffic from arterials and highways to their ultimate destination, and collecting traffic from local roadways to roads higher in the street classification hierarchy, such as arterials and state highways. Collector roads serve a dual function by providing access to properties on the roadway and moving moderate traffic volumes for medium length trips. There are no collector roadways within the immediate vicinity of the project area.

Local/Neighborhood Streets

Local roadways are intended to serve as access roads to adjacent properties only. They provide connections to higher order roadways, carry little if any through traffic, and generally have low traffic volumes. Manicina Road and Forest Service Road provide access to Meeks Bay Campground, a day-use area, parking, and the existing marina in the southern portion of the project area. A series of internal roadways provide access to campsites, parking, a day-use area, and the Meeks Bay Resort and general store on the northern end of the project area.

TRANSIT SYSTEM

Transit service in the region is provided by a mix of public and private transit services. TTD and Tahoe Truckee Area Regional Transit (TART) are the region's two transit providers. These providers operate year-round and seasonal services on the north, east, south and west shores. They also provide commute services to nearby areas such as Truckee to the north and Carson Valley to the east. Washoe Regional Transportation Commission, the Town of Truckee, state Departments of Transportation, and private entities, such as ski resorts, also partner with transit providers to offer transit service through cost sharing agreements, formula funding allotments, and private shuttles and taxi services.

TART connects the north and west shores of Tahoe to the Town of Truckee year-round and runs a free night shuttle service during summer. TART service does not extend south of the Placer County line on the west shore of Lake Tahoe in the project area. TTD provides year-round service throughout the south shore and connects to the

neighboring communities of Gardnerville and Minden. The TTD has connected parts of the west and east shores during the summer with the Emerald Bay Trolley and the East Shore Express, but these services have been suspended in recent years. Some local buses also provide connections to trailheads, such as at Spooner Summit. Though many parts of the lake are served with transit, year-around connections from North to South do not exist.

TART and TTD supply on-demand services to qualified individuals with special needs who are unable to independently use the fixed-route transit system. Location-specific shuttle service is provided by private companies and public/private partnerships. Many major ski resorts also provide shuttle services. Additionally, some private shuttle companies focus on the needs of the recreational hiker and biker by providing point-to-point pick-up and drop-off. Private providers include Flume Trail Bikes and Over the Edge Tahoe.

No transit services, publicly or privately operated, are currently provided to the project area. The nearest (TART) bus stop is located north of Meeks Bay at the Sugar Pine Point State Park stop, which serves the Main Line route. No on-demand transit services or location-specific shuttle service are currently provided to the project area.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

The bicycle and pedestrian transportation system in the Tahoe Region is composed of bikeways and trails. The Active Transportation Plan classifies bicycle facilities into the following three types:

- ▶ Shared-Use Path (Class I): A paved shared-use path is a completely separate trail for active transport users (i.e., for walking and cycling). The path is recommended to be 10 feet wide and provide for two direction travel.
- ▶ Bike Lane (Class II): Bike lanes are striped six feet wide lanes and provide one way travel on a shared roadway with vehicles.
- ▶ Bike Route (Class III): A bike route is a shared roadway typically located on low-volume and low-speed streets. Signs and painted “sharrows” assist with wayfinding and show the preferred location of the biker within the roadway.

As of 2018, El Dorado County’s bike and pedestrian system is comprised of 12 miles of Class I shared-use paths and 11 miles of Class II bike lanes totaling 22 miles (TRPA 2018). LTBMU also operates and maintains 350 miles of National Forest System Trails and 250 miles of National Forest System Roads. National Forest System Trails are subject to a separate classification system oriented toward the level of trail development as opposed to the allowable trail facility uses.

The region has over 80 miles in separated Class I shared-use paths and sidewalks. These routes are well connected in some areas and have gaps in others. Caltrans and local jurisdictions have constructed sidewalks along the state highway system through town centers and more are planned. Local jurisdictions are connecting Class I shared-use paths around the lake, providing links across communities and to neighboring areas. Since 2010, more than seven and a half miles of sidewalks, approximately 22 bike lanes, and over six and a half miles of shared-use paths have been constructed throughout the region (TRPA 2018).

A Class I shared use path that is part of the Tahoe Trail currently exists adjacent to SR 89 along the west shore of Lake Tahoe with its southernmost terminus at Meeks Bay Resort. The path currently connects Meeks Bay to Sugar Pine Point State Park and the northern Lake Tahoe area. The Tahoe Trail is ultimately envisioned as a multi-use path that will circle Lake Tahoe; thus, improving connectivity within and between communities and access to beaches, trails, and other recreation areas. Meeks Bay Trailhead is also located across SR 89 from the Meeks Bay Resort, offering hiking access to Meeks Meadow, Desolation Wilderness, the Tahoe Rim Trail, and the Pacific Crest Trail.

3.12.3 Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section describes the analysis techniques, assumptions, and results used to identify potential significant impacts of the project on the transportation system. Transportation impacts are described and assessed, and mitigation measures are recommended for impacts identified as significant or potentially significant.

METHODOLOGY

NEPA and associated Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) guidelines and regulations defer to federal lead agencies regarding the approach for transportation analysis. TRPA's standards and procedure for VMT analysis recognize and align with SB 743; however, there are some differences in analytical approach. One such difference is that TRPA considers only in-basin VMT, while CEQA requires a broader analysis using full trip lengths to calculate VMT. Therefore, the transportation analysis herein addresses impacts based on both the CEQA thresholds of significance (state) and TRPA thresholds standards (regional).

State CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 was added December 28, 2018, to address the determination of significance for transportation impacts. The new guideline requires that the analysis be based on VMT instead of congestion (such as LOS). The change in the focus of transportation analysis is the result of legislation (SB 743) and is intended to shift the emphasis from congestion to, among other things, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, promoting a diversity of land uses, and developing multimodal transportation networks. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(c), this change in analysis is mandated to be used beginning July 1, 2020. Therefore, VMT is included in this analysis.

TRPA developed the PIA to describe VMT analysis requirements for development projects in the Tahoe Basin, which reflect 2021 updates to the TRPA Environmental Thresholds, and that are aligned with recent California legislative changes (i.e., Senate Bill 743, Public Resources Code Section 21099, and California Code of Regulations Section 15064.3). Therefore, the VMT analysis herein primarily relies on the guidance provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3 and Section 65.2 of the TRPA Code of Ordinances. It should be noted that the approach for calculating and analyzing the project-generated VMT is dictated by the applicable documents, guidance, and requirement discussed in detail above which is specific to the transportation chapter of this document. Other resource areas within this document (e.g., Recreation) that do not have a prescribed methodology may use a slightly different and more conservative approach.

CEQA Methodology

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b) identifies four criteria for analyzing the transportation impacts of a project. To determine how the project should be considered under CEQA, each of the criteria is discussed below.

Section 15064.3(b)(1) addresses land use projects. The project includes the redevelopment of the existing site which would include land use changes and an increase in intensity of certain existing land uses (i.e., increase in number of campsites). Therefore, the project would be considered a new trip-generating land use project; thus, this section of the CEQA guidelines would apply.

Section 15064.3(b)(2) addresses transportation projects. The project includes new bicycle and pedestrian facilities as well as a bridge replacement. Therefore, this section would apply.

Section 15064.3(b)(3), Qualitative Analysis, states that if existing models or methods are not available to estimate the VMT for the particular project being considered, a lead agency may analyze the project's VMT qualitatively. Additionally, this section notes that for many projects, a qualitative analysis of construction traffic may be appropriate. This section is applicable to the construction generated VMT associated with the project.

Section 15064.3(b)(4), Methodology, explains that the lead agency has discretion to choose the most appropriate methodology to evaluate VMT subject to other applicable standards, such as CEQA Guidelines Section 15151 (standards of adequacy for EIR analyses).

The OPR Technical Advisory (OPR 2018) details that for redevelopment projects replacing existing VMT-generating land uses, if the replacement leads to a net overall decrease in VMT, the project results in a less-than-significant transportation impact. Additionally, the Technical Advisory notes that projects generating or attracting fewer than 110 trips per day generally may be assumed to cause a less-than-significant transportation impact, absent substantial evidence indicating otherwise. Therefore, using OPR guidance, if the project results in a net overall decrease in VMT or generates fewer than 110 net new trips per day, then it would result in a less-than-significant VMT impact.

Relevant to calculating trips is Section 15064.3, subdivision (a), which states, "For the purposes of this section, 'vehicle miles traveled' refers to the amount and distance of automobile travel attributable to a project." Here, the term "automobile" refers to on-road passenger vehicles, specifically cars and light trucks (OPR 2018). Heavy-duty truck VMT could be included for modeling convenience and ease of calculation (for example, where models or data provide combined auto and heavy truck VMT) but need not be. Therefore, larger on-road construction vehicles that do not fall within the categories of cars and light trucks do not need to be considered in calculations of trips or VMT. Additionally, the Technical Advisory states that when evaluating impacts to multimodal transportation networks, lead agencies generally should not treat the addition of new transit users as an adverse impact.

TRPA Methodology

The project would redevelop the existing project area; and thus, would be considered a redevelopment project as described in the TRPA Code of Ordinances. For these reasons the net average daily generated VMT is considered against the screening criteria and the TRPA-based analysis herein generally relies on the recommended analysis methodology for redevelopment and recreation projects as described within the TRPA Code of Ordinances and PIA.

TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D describes that some project types are presumed to result in a less-than-significant VMT impact absent any evidence to the contrary. These projects are exempt (or "screened") from further VMT analysis but the amount of average daily VMT generated must still be calculated and the mobility mitigation fee must still be paid (TRPA 2021a).

The TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D.2 states that projects generating below a certain level of average daily VMT are exempted from further analysis. Based on the location of the project, the generation of up to 715 average daily VMT is considered low-VMT generating. Additionally, TRPA has developed the PIA Tool, which can be used for certain VMT analysis tasks including project screening to determine whether a project is exempt from further VMT analysis. The PIA Tool provides project-generated VMT calculations based on the land use type, size, and location of the project using location-based trip length data from the Tahoe Activity-Based model and Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation rates for non-residential projects. Trip generation is calculated by multiplying the applicable ITE trip generation rate by the related independent variable (e.g., acreage, number of campsites, number of employees) as defined by ITE. Some land uses within the ITE Trip Generation Manual employ parking spaces as the independent variable used to calculate trip generation; however, none of the land uses included as part of the project utilize automobile parking spaces as the independent variable. Thus, any change in the number of parking spaces proposed as part of the project would not influence the project trip generation or VMT as calculated using the TRPA PIA Tool. Additionally, TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D.3 states that bicycle, pedestrian, and transit projects (excluding mobility hubs) are exempted from further analysis.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The thresholds of significance (which include TRPA threshold standards) were developed based on the State CEQA Guidelines, TRPA Threshold Standards, the TRPA Initial Environmental Checklist, LTBMU Forest Plan, and other applicable policies and regulations. Under NEPA, the significance of an effect must consider the context and intensity of the environmental effect. The factors that are considered under NEPA to determine the context and intensity of its effects are encompassed by the thresholds of significance. An alternative would have a significant effect on transportation and circulation if it would:

- ▶ conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities;
- ▶ conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b) Regarding Vehicle Miles Traveled;
- ▶ substantially increase hazards because of a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment);
- ▶ result in inadequate emergency access;

- ▶ substantially impact existing transit, highway, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities or alter present patterns of circulations;
- ▶ result in a substantial increase in new average daily VMT such that TRPA threshold standards would be exceeded as defined within Section 65.2, "Air Quality, Greenhouse Gas Reduction, and Mobility Mitigation Program," of the TRPA Code of Ordinances;
- ▶ substantially increase traffic hazards to motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians because of a design feature or incompatible uses; or
- ▶ substantially alter waterborne traffic.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Impact 3.12-1: Conflict with a Program, Plan, Ordinance or Policy Addressing the Circulation System, Including Transit, Roadway, Bicycle, and Pedestrian Facilities

The Meeks Bay Restoration Project would involve removal of the marina and full restoration of Meeks Creek, lagoon, and barrier beach within the project area. All four action alternatives would make improvements to upland recreation facilities including construction of multi-use paths and bike storage, additional amenities in the day-use areas, and the reconfiguration of the Meeks Bay Resort Campground and Meeks Bay Campground. The consistency of all action alternatives with the RTP, SR 89 Corridor Plan, and ATP result in no conflicts with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian systems. Therefore, the impacts on bicycle and pedestrian facilities under Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 would be beneficial.

The RTP and SR 89 Corridor Plan include plans for future transit service in the area. The project includes the implementation of infrastructure consistent with those plans; and thus, would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing transit services. For this reason, impacts to transit services for Alternatives 1 through 4 would be less than significant.

Under the No Action Alternative, no changes to the existing facilities or project area would be made. The pedestrian and cycling circulation system would remain the same, and the demand for transit services would not change. Therefore, there would be no conflict with a program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian systems or transit services. Thus, the No Action Alternative would result in no impact.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no restoration and the marina would remain. There would be no changes to the operations of the facilities on site, which includes a total of 76 campsites and two day-use areas. The configuration of parking would not change, and the internal roadway network would remain the same. There would be no change to the project area in terms of pedestrian circulation and cycling. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not disrupt existing or planned bicycle/pedestrian facilities, nor would it create inconsistencies with any adopted plans, guidelines, policies, or standards related to bicycle or pedestrian systems. For these reasons, there would be no impact.

Alternative 1: Restoration with Boating Pier

Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Alternative 1 would involve improvements to the upland recreation facilities that includes the construction of two multi-use paths (one path combined with the SR 89 bridge replacement and one path that includes a separate bridge crossing over the creek) and bike storage. The multi-use paths would connect to an existing shared-use path which currently ends in the northern part of the project area. The multi-use paths would continue south, one through the middle of the project area, providing direct access to the day-use areas and campsites, and one along SR 89 and located on the bridge, the alignment to be determined through implementation planning from the SR 89 Corridor Plan. The separate multi-use path bridge across the restoration area would provide pedestrian access between the north and south sides of Meeks Bay. New bike parking areas and bike racks would be installed near both day-use

areas to accommodate cyclists accessing the project area via the new multi-use path. The addition of the multi-use paths would be compatible with the SR 89 Corridor Plan, RTP, and ATP. Specifically, the extension of the existing multi-use path meets the following goals outlined in the SR 89 Corridor Plan:

- ▶ Provide a quality travel experience for all;
- ▶ Improve the environment;
- ▶ Advance safety; and
- ▶ Create comfortable, connected, and convenient transit and trail systems (TRPA et al. 2020).

The SR 89 Corridor Plan distinguishes the routing and construction of the Tahoe Trail through Meeks Bay as a key project for the Meeks Bay segment (TRPA et al. 2020:106). Additionally, the 2020 RTP identifies several trail improvements, including the implementation of key segments of the West Shore Tahoe Trail which would connect Spring Creek Road and Meeks Bay by 2035. The Class I shared-use path alignment would be determined from the SR 89 Trail Feasibility Study (TRPA 2021c:62). The RTP also identifies Meeks Bay Highway Corridor Improvements in its list of projects which includes formalizing and upgrading parking access to the wilderness at Meeks Bay trailhead and constructing a new multi-use path and bridge (TRPA 2021c:163). The multi-use paths planned for the Meeks Bay project would provide a connection that would satisfy and not conflict with the intent of any of the plans discussed above. Two additional campsites would result in a slight increase in visitation but would have a negligible effect on bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The planned improvements would also result in the realignment of roadways near the entrance and day-use area at Meeks Bay Resort and provide enhanced internal circulation for pedestrians and bicyclists in the project area.

Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additionally, the implementation of the multi-use paths and reconfiguration of the internal circulation network would be consistent with existing area plans. Because the alternative would implement multi-use paths identified in those plans, the impact on bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be a beneficial effect.

Transit Services

The RTP envisions a built-out transit system by 2045 with frequent service operating every 15 minutes in the project corridor (TRPA 2021c:53-54). Additionally, the SR 89 Corridor Plan recommends a bus stop at Meeks Bay (TRPA et al. 2020:106-107). Located along a core route and because of high rates of recreational activity in the area, recreational activities located at Meeks Bay generate demand for transit. The SR 89 Corridor Plan notes that an average of 1.8 million annual visitors used the SR 89 corridor in 2014, and the RTP Travel Demand Analysis found that 8 percent of recreational travel is taken by transit.

To support the RTP and SR 89 Corridor Plan visions for future transit service in the area, Alternative 1 would include the implementation of infrastructure to accommodate a future transit stop such as a bus pull out if such a stop is not provided along SR 89 outside of the project area. Coordination with TART would inform the appropriate location and facility type for future bus service in the area. Therefore, implementation of Alternative 1 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing transit services. Thus, the impact on transit services would be less than significant.

Alternative 2: Restoration with Pedestrian Pier

Restoration and reconfiguration of the site, and campsite reorganization associated with Alternative 2 are similar to those discussed in Alternative 1. Alternative 2 would construct two multi-use paths through the project area and each would include construction of a separate bridge over the creek. One path would closely following the highway and the other path would be more centrally located through the project area. Construction of the multi-use paths onsite would connect to an existing shared-use path that currently ends in the northern part of the project area and the paths align with the intent of the SR 89 Corridor Plan, RTP, and ATP to promote non-automobile modes of transportation similar to Alternative 1 described above. Additionally, Alternative 2 includes the construction of an approximately 100-foot-long pedestrian pier which would not allow for motorized boat access. The pier would improve public recreational access to the lake for pedestrians.

Therefore, implementation of Alternative 2 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additionally, the implementation of the multi-use paths and reconfiguration of the internal circulation network would be consistent with existing plans for the area. Because the alternative would implement multi-use paths identified in those plans, the impact on bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be a beneficial effect.

Alternative 2 would not conflict with plans for future transit in the project area for the reasons discussed in Alternative 1. The RTP and SR 89 Corridor Plan envision expanded transit service in the vicinity of the project, and consistent with those plans the project includes the implementation of infrastructure to accommodate a transit stop within the project area. For this reason, the impact associated with transit services would be less than significant.

Alternative 3: Restoration with No Pier

Restoration and reconfiguration of the site and the construction of the multi-use paths associated with Alternative 3 are similar to those in Alternative 2. As discussed above, the construction of the multi-use paths in the project area align with the intent of the SR 89 Corridor Plan, RTP, and ATP.

Therefore, implementation of Alternative 3 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additionally, the implementation of the multi-use paths and reconfiguration of the internal circulation network would be consistent with existing area plans. Because the alternative would implement multi-use paths identified in those plans, the impact on bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be beneficial.

Alternative 3 would not conflict with plans for future transit in the project area as discussed in Alternatives 1 and 2. The RTP and SR 89 Corridor Plan envision expanded transit service in the vicinity of the project, and consistent with those plans the project includes the implementation of infrastructure to accommodate a transit stop within the project area. For this reason, the impact associated with transit services would be less than significant.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Alternative 4 would result in the same improvements related to bicycle and pedestrian systems as those described above for Alternative 1. Because the alternative would implement multi-use paths identified in those plans, the impact on bicycle and pedestrian facilities would be beneficial.

Implementation of Alternative 4 would result in the same improvements related to transit services as those described above for Alternative 1. Therefore, implementation of the Alternative 4 would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing transit services. Thus, the impact on transit services would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

Impact 3.12-2: Conflict or Be Inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, Subdivision (b) Regarding Vehicle Miles Traveled

By virtue of marina removal and other project area changes (e.g., change in number of campsites and parking spaces) associated with Alternatives 1 through 4, the action alternatives would result in a decrease in average daily trips and average daily VMT. Thus, the action alternatives would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT of 110 average daily trips and 715 average daily VMT, respectively. As such, the impacts under Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 would result in a less-than-significant impact.

The No Action Alternative would not result in an increase in average daily trips or VMT. There would be no impact related to VMT from the No Action Alternative.

No Action Alternative

As discussed in Chapter 2, "Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives," the No Action Alternative would involve no physical improvements or changes to the project area or any substantial changes in management approaches. Existing operation and maintenance of the existing facilities on the project area would continue. As such,

the No Action Alternative would not result in any changes in the number of trips generated or associated VMT; therefore, there would be no impact related to the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 1: Full Restoration with Boating Pier

As discussed in Chapter 2, Alternative 1 would result in the removal of the existing marina, 120 boat slips, and boat ramp. Additionally, it would include the construction of a centrally located pier to accommodate recreational boaters and an emergency services boat and increased capacity for day visitors (i.e., larger day-use area with better accessibility and additional picnic tables). The total number of campsites under Alternative 1 would range from 36 to 42 sites as compared to the existing 40 campsites. Although it is possible that the total number of campsites could decrease under Alternative 1, to provide a conservative analysis it is assumed that the number of campsites would increase by up to two, from 40 sites to 42 sites. Additionally, the project would accommodate a future transit stop (either within the project area or nearby on SR 89) and new proposed bike and pedestrian infrastructure as detailed in Chapter 2.

The proposed public pier is an accessory structure within a multiple-use facility (e.g., the project area which is a recreation site providing opportunities for camping, boating, picnicking, swimming, and beach use) and not the primary land use that would generate vehicular trips (e.g., public beach). Thus, the proposed public pier would function as an accessory structure that would not generate additional vehicle trips beyond those trips already generated by the campsites, public beach, or other primary land use. Consistent with TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D.3 and the OPR Technical Advisory, the transit and active transportation infrastructure improvements proposed under Alternative 1 would generally reduce VMT and are therefore screened from further analysis.

Consistent with guidance provided in the PIA for the evaluation of redevelopment projects, the net average daily VMT generation is considered against the TRPA screening criteria. This requires a calculation of the net change in average daily VMT associated with implementation of the project. Additionally, because the PIA Tool considers only in-basin VMT and does not account for the portion of trips that may fall outside of the Tahoe Basin, the average daily VMT calculated using the PIA Tools is not utilized for the purposes of CEQA. Therefore, the number of average daily trips was also calculated using the PIA Tool for comparison against the OPR recommended 110 trips per day CEQA-based screening threshold.

Calculation of the average daily trips and existing average daily VMT for the marina, which would be removed as part of the project, and the two additional campsites as proposed under Alternative 1 was conducted using the PIA Tool. The results of the analysis conducted using the PIA Tool are shown in Table 3.12-1. For detailed data and calculations see Appendix E.

Table 3.12-1 Alternatives 1, 2, and 4 VMT Screening Analysis

Alternative 1 Components	Average Daily Trips	Average Daily VMT	Exceeds CEQA Screening Threshold of 110 net new trips per day? (Yes/No)	Exceeds TRPA Screening Criteria of 715 net new average daily VMT? (Yes/No)
Marina ¹ (removal)	-290	-3,291	NA	NA
Campsites ² (addition)	26	286	NA	NA
TOTAL	-264	-3,005	No	No

Notes: VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled, NA = not applicable

¹ Based on the ITE Trip Rate (2.41) for average daily trips generated per marina slip documented in the PIA Tool (see Appendix E)

² Based on the ITE Trip Rate (12.57) for average daily trips generated per campsite documented in the PIA Tool (see Appendix E)

Source: Compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

As shown in Table 3.12-1, Alternative 1 would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. The addition of infrastructure to accommodate a future transit stop and the proposed bike and pedestrian infrastructure that would provide improved internal and external multimodal connections would likely yield trip reductions; thus, there would be a reduction in the need for on-site parking.

In summary, the changes proposed under Alternative 1 (removal of the marina and development of up to two additional campsites), would result in a decrease in average daily trips and average daily VMT; and thus, would not

exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. Therefore, Alternative 1 would result in a less-than-significant impact associated with VMT.

Alternative 2: Full Restoration with Pedestrian Pier

As discussed in Chapter 2, Alternative 2 would include the construction of a centrally located pier with pedestrian access, but no motorized boat access. Other aspects of the Alternative 2 including removal of the existing marina and boat ramp, increased capacity for day visitors, and the potential addition of up to two campsites would be consistent with Alternative 1, described above. As described for Alternative 1 above, the proposed pedestrian pier would function as accessory structure that would not generate additional vehicle trips beyond those trips already generated by the campsites, public beach, or other primary land use. Consistent with Alternative 1, the addition of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian infrastructure improvements planned under Alternative 2 are screened from further analysis. Similar to Alternative 1, land use changes under Alternative 2 would include removal of the marina and development of up to two additional campsites. Thus, similar to the analysis and findings in Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would result in a decrease in average daily trips and average daily VMT (see Table 3.12-1); and thus, would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. This impact would be less than significant.

Alternative 3: Full Restoration with No Pier

As discussed above for Alternative 1, Alternative 3 would result in the removal of the existing marina and boat ramp. Additionally, it would include increased capacity for day visitors (i.e., larger parking area) and Alternative 3 would increase capacity at the campgrounds with up to 22 additional campsites (i.e., from 76 to up to 98 total campsites). This alternative would include up to 14 additional parking spaces; however, as described above under “TRPA Methodology,” this change in the number of parking spaces would not influence the trip generation or VMT of Alternative 3, as calculated using the TRPA PIA Tool.

The project would include infrastructure to accommodate a future transit stop that could be within the project area or along SR 89 and new bike and pedestrian infrastructure as detailed in Chapter 2. However, consistent with TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D.3 and the OPR Technical Advisory, the transit and active transportation infrastructure improvements proposed under Alternative 3 would reduce VMT; and thus, are screened out from further analysis.

Consistent with guidance provided in the PIA for the evaluation of redevelopment projects, the net average daily VMT generation is considered against the screening criteria. This requires a calculation of the net change in average daily VMT associated with implementation of the project. Additionally, as described above for Alternative 1, the number of average daily trips was also calculated using the PIA Tool for comparison against the OPR recommended 110 trips per day CEQA-based screening threshold.

The PIA Tool was used to calculate the average daily trips and existing average daily VMT for the marina, which would be removed as part of the project, and up to 22 additional campsites as proposed under Alternative 3. The results of the analysis conducted using the PIA Tool are shown in Table 3.12-2. For detailed data and calculations see Appendix E.

Table 3.12-2 Alternative 3 VMT Screening Analysis

	Average Daily Trips	Average Daily VMT	Exceeds CEQA Screening Threshold of 110 net new trips per day? (Yes/No)	Exceeds TRPA Screening Criteria of 715 net new average daily VMT? (Yes/No)
Marina ¹ (removal)	-290	-3,291	NA	NA
Campsites ² (addition)	277	3,147	NA	NA
TOTAL	-13	-144	No	No

Notes: VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled, NA = not applicable

¹ Based on the ITE Trip Rate (2.41) for average daily trips generated per marina slip documented in the PIA Tool (see Appendix E)

² Based on the ITE Trip Rate (12.57) for average daily trips generated per campsite documented in the PIA Tool (see Appendix E)

Source: Compiled by Ascent Environmental in 2022.

As shown in Table 3.12-2, Alternative 3 would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. The addition of infrastructure to accommodate a future transit stop and the proposed bike and pedestrian infrastructure that would provide improved internal and external multimodal connections would likely yield trip reductions; and thus, a reduction in the need for on-site parking.

In summary, the changes proposed under Alternative 3 (removal of the marina and development of up to 22 additional campsites), would result in a decrease in average daily trips and average daily VMT; and thus, would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. Therefore, Alternative 3 would result in a less-than-significant impact associated with VMT.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Alternative 4 would result in similar changes related to the marina and boat ramp, campgrounds, multi-use paths, transit facility, and other recreation facilities compared to Alternative 1. Additionally, similar to Alternative 3, this alternative would include the construction of a paddle launch facility and would include up to 14 additional parking spaces; however, as described above under "TRPA Methodology," this change in the number of parking spaces would not influence the trip generation or VMT of Alternative 3, as calculated using the TRPA PIA Tool. Consistent with TRPA Code Subparagraph 65.2.3.D.3 and the OPR Technical Advisory, the transit and active transportation infrastructure improvements proposed under Alternative 4 would generally reduce VMT; and thus, are screened from further analysis.

The net average daily VMT resulting from implementation of Alternative 4 would be similar to those described above for Alternative 1 and are shown in Table 3.12-1. For detailed data and calculations see Appendix E. As shown in Table 3.12-1, Alternative 4 would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. The addition of infrastructure to accommodate a future transit stop and the proposed bike and pedestrian infrastructure that would provide improved internal and external multimodal connections would likely yield trip reductions.

In summary, the changes proposed under Alternative 4 (removal of the marina and development of up to two additional campsites), would result in a decrease in average daily trips and average daily VMT; and thus, would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT. Therefore, Alternative 4 would be considered a low-VMT generating project and is exempted from further analysis and presumed to not result in a substantial increase in VMT. Alternative 4 would result in a less-than-significant impact related to VMT.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

Impact 3.12-3: Substantially Increase Transportation Hazards due to a Design Feature or Incompatible Uses

The new SR 89 bridge proposed by Alternatives 1 through 4 would not include any design features, such as a sharp curve or new intersection, or incompatible uses that would result in transportation safety hazards. Alternatives 1 through 4 would remove the marina and boat ramp, which would eliminate trailers with motorized boats from entering and exiting the project area or traveling through the project area, thereby reducing hazards on the highway and for bicyclists and pedestrians in the project area. The project would be required to follow all Caltrans guidelines and regulations to meet all design and safety standards during construction and operations. The project also includes a resource protection measure (see Appendix A) requiring preparation and implementation of a traffic management plan to maintain safety and minimize traffic disturbance during construction activities. For these reasons, the project would not substantially increase transportation-related hazards; therefore, the impacts under Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 would be less than significant.

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction activity would take place and the Meeks Bay recreation area, campground configuration, and operations would remain the same. There would be no impact relative to hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no restoration and the marina would remain as is. There would be no changes to the operations of the facilities on site, which includes a total of 76 campsites and two day-use areas. The configuration of parking would not change, the internal roadway network would remain the same, and the SR 89 bridge would not be replaced. There would be no changes to the project area and construction would not take place. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses. For these reasons, there would be no impact.

Alternative 1: Restoration with Boating Pier

Alternative 1 would involve restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, reconstruction of cabins, replacement of the SR 89 bridge that would include a multi-use path, and upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure. Circulation improvements would reduce the number of internal roadways by the Meeks Bay Resort entrance and day-use areas. Potential conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians on the multi-use paths where they cross roadways in the project area are further addressed in Impact 3.1-2 in Section 3.1, "Recreation."

Alternative 1 includes construction of a boating pier but would remove the marina and boat ramp. Removal of the marina and boat ramp would result in no trailers for motorized boats entering and exiting the project area or traveling through the northern part of the project area, thereby reducing hazards for bicyclists and pedestrians in the parking lots. The boating pier would meet design and accessibility standards that are further discussed in Chapter 2, "Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives."

The new SR 89 bridge would not include any design features, such as a sharp curve or new intersection, or incompatible uses that would result in transportation safety hazards.

The project is subject to USDA Forest Service and Caltrans review processes that would ensure that the project design would comply with all applicable industry roadway/driveway design standards. In accordance with Caltrans and industry-wide standards, the project would provide adequate sight distance at all access points. All daily campground operations would remain the same and the boating pier would be managed by USDA Forest Service staff or a concessionaire.

Construction

All phases of transportation infrastructure construction would comply with Caltrans standards and regulations. Construction staging would be located within the project area in paved areas or previously disturbed areas outside of the restoration areas. As discussed in Chapter 2, construction best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented in accordance with all standards and Caltrans requirements, such as those found in the CA-MUTCD, Part 6: Temporary Traffic Control and California Highway Design Manual.

Additionally, a traffic management plan would be developed as a resource protection measure that is part of the project and implemented with input from the USDA Forest Service and Caltrans. Traffic control measures would be required on site to minimize lane closures, maintain emergency access, and limit delays during the SR 89 bridge replacement (emergency access is further discussed under Impact 3.12-4). All project construction activity would follow Caltrans regulations in the following documents:

- ▶ California Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD): adopts uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices in California.
- ▶ Caltrans Highway Design Manual: establishes uniform policies and procedures to carry out the state highway design functions of Caltrans.
- ▶ Caltrans Encroachment Permits: may need to be obtained for all proposed activities related to the placement of encroachments within, under, or over the state highway rights of way.
- ▶ Work Zone Safety Standards, Traffic Safety Devices and Traffic Safety Systems Guidance: establishes policies and procedures for traffic safety systems, including barriers, guardrail, crash attenuators, and end treatments and provides guidance for application of safety systems.
- ▶ All other applicable Caltrans regulations and documents.

Construction traffic impacts would be localized and temporary; however, during construction of the project, traffic operations could be degraded. For this reason, the project would be required to follow all Caltrans protocols, as discussed above, and develop a traffic management plan that would include measures such as maintaining continuous emergency access through the project area, temporary signage, and reduced vehicle speeds to maintain safety and minimize traffic disturbance during construction activities. Thus, the impact related to hazards because of a design feature or incompatible uses would be less than significant.

Alternative 2: Full Restoration with Pedestrian Pier

Restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, SR 89 bridge replacement, and upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure associated with Alternative 2 are similar to those discussed in Alternative 1. Similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would also result in circulation improvements for cyclists and pedestrians to reduce the number of internal roadways near the entrance and day-use area at Meeks Bay Resort.

Alternative 2 includes the construction of an approximately 100-foot-long pedestrian pier, which would not allow motorized boat access. Alternative 2 would result in the same reduction in hazards associated with motorized boating trailers as described above for Alternative 1. A universally accessible walkway would connect the pedestrian pier to the day-use and parking areas. Similar to Alternative 1, the SR 89 bridge replacement would be required to meet Caltrans design standards.

Construction

The construction activities under Alternative 2 would be similar to those discussed for Alternative 1. The SR 89 bridge replacement may require periods of lane closure, which is further discussed below under Impact 3.12-4. All phases of construction would comply with Caltrans standards and regulations for all elements of the project, as described above for Alternative 1, and develop a traffic management plan (see the description of construction details under Section 2.10.2, "State Route 89 Bridge Replacement") that would maintain safety and minimize traffic disturbance during construction activities. Thus, the project would not substantially increase hazards related to transportation for residents or visitors in the area.

Therefore, Alternative 2 would not substantially increase hazards because of a design feature or incompatible uses and the impact would be less than significant.

Alternative 3: Restoration with No Pier

Restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, SR 89 bridge replacement, and upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure associated with Alternative 3 are similar to those discussed in Alternatives 1 and 2. Similar to Alternatives 1 and 2, Alternative 3 would result in circulation improvements for cyclists and pedestrians to reduce the number of internal roadways near the entrance and day-use area at Meeks Bay Resort.

Alternative 3 includes the expansion of parking by 14 spaces to include a total of 80 stalls in a new parking area near the entrance to the Meeks Bay campground and a 10-stall parking area that would include a universally accessible/ADA-compliant parking and a drop off area near the south day-use area. Although Alternative 3 does not include the construction of a pier, it does involve a non-motorized launch facility in the southern portion of the project area. Because the marina and boat ramp would be removed, Alternative 3 would result in the same reduction in hazards associated with motorized boating trailers as described above for Alternative 1.

Construction

The construction activities for Alternative 3 would be similar to those discussed in Alternatives 1 and 2. The SR 89 bridge replacement may require lane narrowing and limited full closure, which is further discussed below under Impact 3.12-4. All phases of construction would comply with Caltrans standards and regulations and develop a traffic management plan, as described above for Alternative 1, to maintain safety and minimize traffic disturbance during construction activities. Thus, the project would not substantially increase hazards related to transportation for residents or visitors in the area.

Therefore, Alternative 3 would not substantially increase hazards because of a design feature or incompatible uses and the impact would be less than significant.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, SR 89 bridge replacement that would include a multi-use path, and upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure associated with Alternative 4 are similar to those discussed in Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. Similar to Alternatives 1, 2, and 3, Alternative 4 would result in circulation improvements for cyclists and pedestrians to reduce the number of internal roadways near the entrance and day-use area at Meeks Bay Resort.

Alternative 4 includes the expansion of parking in the project area by 14 spaces. Although Alternative 4 does not include the construction of a pier, it does involve a non-motorized launch facility in the southern portion of the project area. Because the marina and boat ramp would be removed, Alternative 4 would result in the same reduction in hazards associated with motorized boating trailers as described above for Alternative 1.

Construction

The construction activities for Alternative 4 would be similar to those discussed for Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. The SR 89 bridge replacement may require lane narrowing and limited full closure, which is further discussed below under Impact 3.12-4. All phases of construction would comply with Caltrans standards and regulations and develop a traffic management plan to maintain safety and minimize traffic disturbance during construction activities; thus, the project would not substantially increase hazards related to transportation for residents or visitors in the area.

Therefore, Alternative 3 would not substantially increase hazards because of a design feature or incompatible uses and the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

Impact 3.12-4: Result in Inadequate Emergency Access

The project would be designed and constructed in alignment with all applicable regulations including USDA Forest Service and Caltrans standards related to emergency access design guidelines and construction. Additionally, the multi-use path that would pass through the center of the project area and across the restored Meeks Creek via a multi-use trail bridge, would be designed to accommodate maintenance vehicle access and could be used for emergency vehicle access. Although all action alternatives involve the replacement of the SR 89 bridge, which could potentially require lane narrowing and/or lane closures during construction, the project would develop a traffic management plan and be required to meet all Caltrans standards and regulations intended to maintain emergency access through construction and operations and would maintain continuous emergency access across Meeks Creek. The project would not result in inadequate emergency access, and impacts under Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4 would be less than significant.

Under the No Action Alternative, the project area would not change, the operations in the project area would remain as is, and no construction would take place. Therefore, emergency access would not be affected resulting in no impact.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, there would be no restoration and the marina would remain as is. There would be no changes to the operations of the facilities on site which includes a total of 76 campsites and two day-use areas. The configuration of parking would not change, the internal roadway network would remain the same, and the SR 89 bridge would not be replaced. There would be no change to the project area and construction would not take place. Therefore, the No Action Alternative would not result in inadequate emergency access. For these reasons, there would be no impact.

Alternative 1: Restoration with Boating Pier

Alternative 1 would restore Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, build two multi-use paths, reconfigure the day-use areas and parking, replace the SR 89 bridge that would include a multi-use path, and upgrade or relocate utility infrastructure. As discussed in Chapter 2, "Description of the Proposed Action and Alternatives," the multi-use path that would pass through the center of the project area and across the restored Meeks Creek via a multi-use trail bridge, would be designed to accommodate maintenance vehicle access and could be used for emergency vehicle access. Alternative 1 would also construct a boating pier that would include one boat lift to accommodate a 29-foot emergency services boat that could be operated by the Meeks Bay Fire Protection District.

As discussed in detail in Impact 3.12-3 above, all transportation infrastructure improvements would meet USDA Forest Service and Caltrans design standards. The project would also be required to follow the El Dorado County Regional Fire Protection Standard related to Emergency Apparatus Access Ways (Standard #B-003), which establishes guidelines for fire access roadways required by the fire department. These standards apply to every public and private street, road, alley, and drive and access way within the boundaries served by the fire department (El Dorado County Fire Protection Officers 2009a).

Construction

Construction of the new SR 89 bridge would require construction in the highway and as such would interfere with access on the highway. As discussed in Impact 3.12-3, the project would be required to meet all Caltrans construction safety standards. Additionally, the project applicant would follow all regulations detailed in the El Dorado County Regional Fire Protection Standard related to Fire Department Access During Construction (Standard #G-001). Standard #G-001 ensures water supply and access for emergency equipment during construction of new buildings and the development of permitted projects (El Dorado County Fire Protection Officers 2009b). The replacement of the SR 89 bridge could require lane narrowing or single-lane closures and limited road closures that would occur during off peak times (i.e., weekdays after Labor Day or before Memorial Day weekends). However, emergency vehicle access would be maintained during the construction period by either: 1) constructing the trail bridge downstream of the SR 89 bridge first and diverting emergency vehicles and evacuating vehicles across the trail bridge, 2) constructing the bridge in halves to maintain one operational lane at all times, or 3) constructing a temporary bridge on the upstream or downstream side of the existing bridge to provide continuous emergency vehicle access. Alternative 1 would include preparation and implementation of a traffic management plan (see Section 2.10.2, "State Route 89 Bridge Replacement") that would specify how emergency services would continue to be provided during temporary lane closures, would require and identify public outreach efforts (e.g., notifying emergency service providers and other affected public agencies and members of the public), and signage. The project would result in limited disruptions to continuous emergency access across Meeks Creek and ensure all USDA Forest Service and Caltrans requirements are met to ensure any potential impacts to emergency vehicles and evacuation are minimized. Therefore, Alternative 1 would not result in inadequate emergency access and the impact would be less than significant.

Alternative 2: Restoration with Pedestrian Pier

Restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, SR 89 bridge replacement, and upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure associated with Alternative 2 are similar to those discussed in Alternative 1. As discussed in Chapter 2, the multi-use path that would pass through the center of the project area and across the restored Meeks Creek via a multi-use trail bridge, would be designed to accommodate maintenance vehicle access and could provide emergency vehicle access. As detailed in Alternative 1, County Regional Fire Protection Standards #B-003 and #G-001 would be followed to meet all necessary regulations regarding emergency access.

As described above for Alternative 1, although construction activities surrounding the SR 89 bridge replacement could require lane narrowing or road closures that would affect circulation, the project would maintain continuous emergency access across Meeks Creek during construction and would ensure all USDA Forest Service and Caltrans requirements are met to ensure any potential impacts to emergency vehicles and evacuation are minimized as detailed under Impact 3.12-3. For this reason, Alternative 2 would not result in inadequate emergency access and the impact would be less than significant.

Alternative 3: Restoration with No Pier

Restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, SR 89 bridge replacement, upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure, and preparation of a traffic management plan associated with Alternative 3 are similar to those discussed in Alternatives 1 and 2. For this reason, Alternative 3 would not result in inadequate emergency access and the impact would be less than significant.

Alternative 4: Preferred Alternative

Restoration of Meeks Creek, removal of the marina and boat ramp, construction of two multi-use paths, reconfiguration of the day-use areas and parking, SR 89 bridge replacement that would include a multi-use path, upgrading or relocating of utility infrastructure, and preparation of a traffic management plan associated with Alternative 4 are similar to those discussed in Alternatives 1, 2, and 3. For this reason, Alternative 4 would not result in inadequate emergency access and the impact would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation is required for this impact.

3.12.4 Cumulative Impacts

A number of future projects that could potentially generate VMT are proposed in the region (See Table 3-2). As described under Impact 3.12-1, all four action alternatives would make improvements to upland recreation facilities including construction of multi-use paths and bike storage, additional amenities in the day-use areas, and reconfiguration of the campgrounds. The consistency of all action alternatives with the RTP, SR 89 Corridor Plan, and ATP result in no conflicts with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing bicycle and pedestrian systems. Therefore, all action alternatives would result in beneficial effects relative to bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Additionally, as described under Impact 3.12-1, the project would accommodate a future bus stop within the project site and would not conflict with existing plans for future transit service in the area.

As detailed under Impact 3.12-2, Alternatives 1 through 4 would result in a decrease in average daily trips and average daily VMT, which considers the removal of the marina with changes proposed in the project area (e.g., change in number of campsites and parking spaces). Thus, the action alternatives would not exceed the CEQA screening threshold or the TRPA screening criteria for VMT of 110 average daily trips and 715 average daily VMT, respectively. Additionally, the recreation initiatives shown in Table 3-2 would presumably reduce VMT (i.e., SR 89 Corridor Plan and Tahoe Trail) while the landscape restoration/wildfire risk reduction initiatives would not result in long-term increases in vehicular trips because the construction would be temporary and intermittent in nature and is not likely to generate new VMT each day, only redistribute it.

Cumulative impacts associated with emergency access and road design are primarily a localized effect. However, cumulative impacts from project-generated construction effects on transportation may result if other future planned construction activities were to take place close to the project site and cumulatively combine to exacerbate the construction-related transportation impacts of the project. As such, the cumulative projects with the potential to result in a significant cumulative impact associated with construction phase emergency access and road design features would be the projects located in the immediate vicinity of the project site. Given there would be very few projects in the immediate vicinity of the project site and because they will also need to demonstrate compliance with applicable design standards and emergency service provider design and emergency response requirements, they would not impede emergency access or cause a potential transportation-related hazard.

For the reasons described above, the alternatives would have a less than cumulatively considerable impact related to transportation.