

CHAPTER 3

PHYSICAL & SOCIO-ECONOMIC SETTING

3.1 Physical Setting

To set the framework in which the current and future transportation systems of Placer County function, a complete characterization of the area is needed. This chapter describes the location, population, employment, housing of Placer County, as well as demographic projections.

LOCATION

Placer County is located in the foothills and mountains of the Sierra Nevada, extending eastward from the eastern portion of California's Central Valley. Placer County is bordered by Nevada County to the north, Sutter County to the west, Sacramento and El Dorado Counties to the south and the State of Nevada to the east. A portion of Lake Tahoe is located in Placer County. Placer County contains 1,506 square miles or 898,820 acres, ranging in elevation from 160 feet above sea level to nearly 9,500 feet above sea level. Figure 3.1 shows the location of Placer County in the context of surrounding counties.

Six incorporated cities are located within the political boundary of Placer County. These include the Cities of Auburn, Colfax, Lincoln, Rocklin, Roseville, and the Town of Loomis. Numerous unincorporated communities also dot Placer County, including Foresthill, Granite Bay, Weimar, Newcastle, Meadow Vista, and Sheridan. Refer to Figures 3.2 and 3.3.

Capital improvement projects identified in the RTP are located on state highways, county roads, local streets, and publicly owned rights-of-way.

CLIMATE

The climate of the Sacramento Valley Air Basin portion of Placer County is characterized by hot, dry summers and cool rainy winters. During the winter, the North Pacific storm track intermittently dominates valley weather. Moderate, dry days and cool nights characterize the summer months in Placer County. The temperature during the summer varies between the Valley and High Country areas. Typically, valley temperatures are higher in summer and winter, while mountain temperatures are lower. The rainy season in Placer County occurs between November and April, but excessive rainfall and damaging windstorms are rare. The Sierra Nevada snow fields are a major source of water during the dry summer months. Table 3.1 shows average temperatures and precipitation in Placer County.

Figure 3.1
Placer County Location within California & SACOG Region

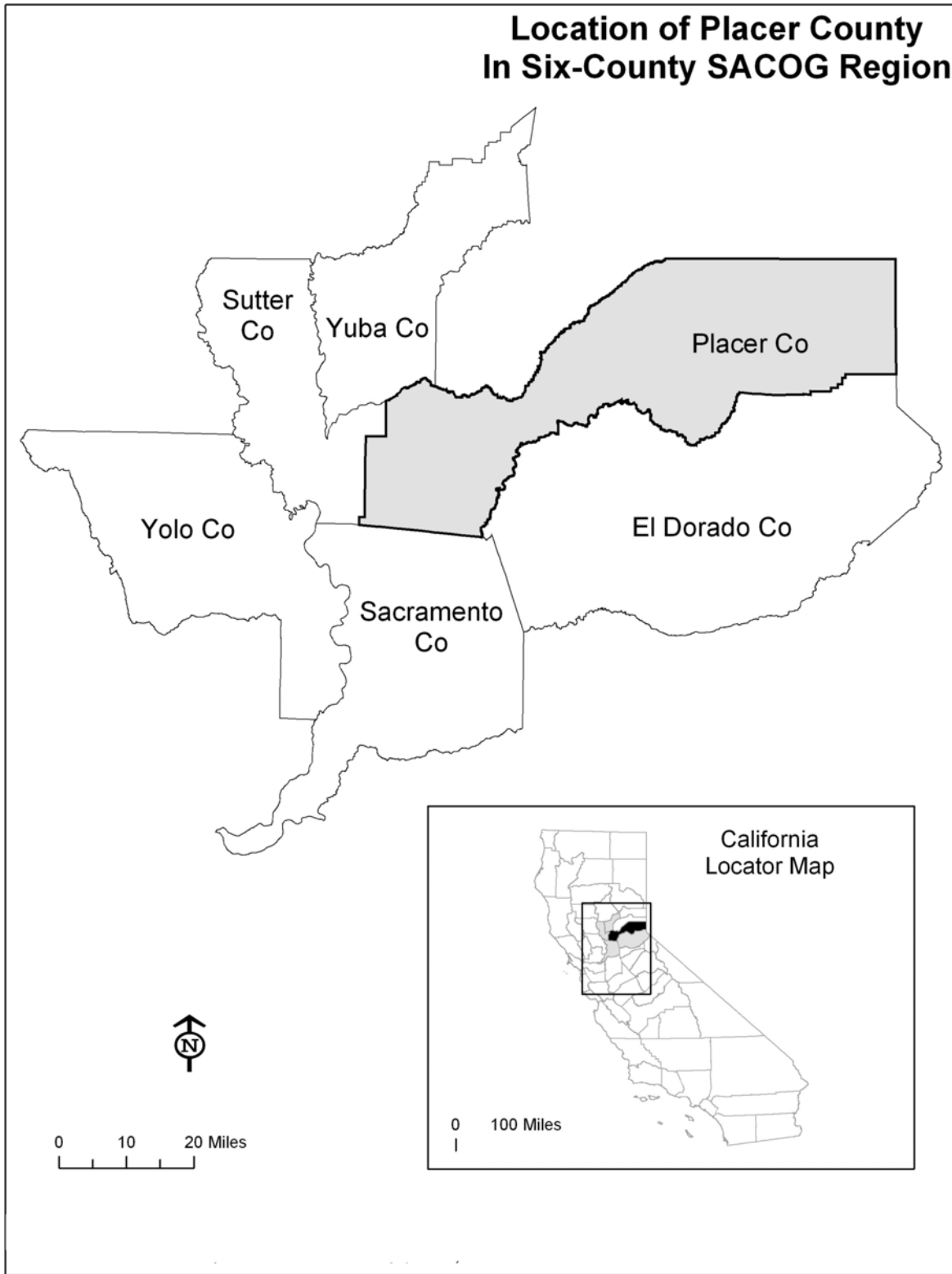


Figure 3.3
Incorporated Cities and Unincorporated Communities in Eastern Placer County

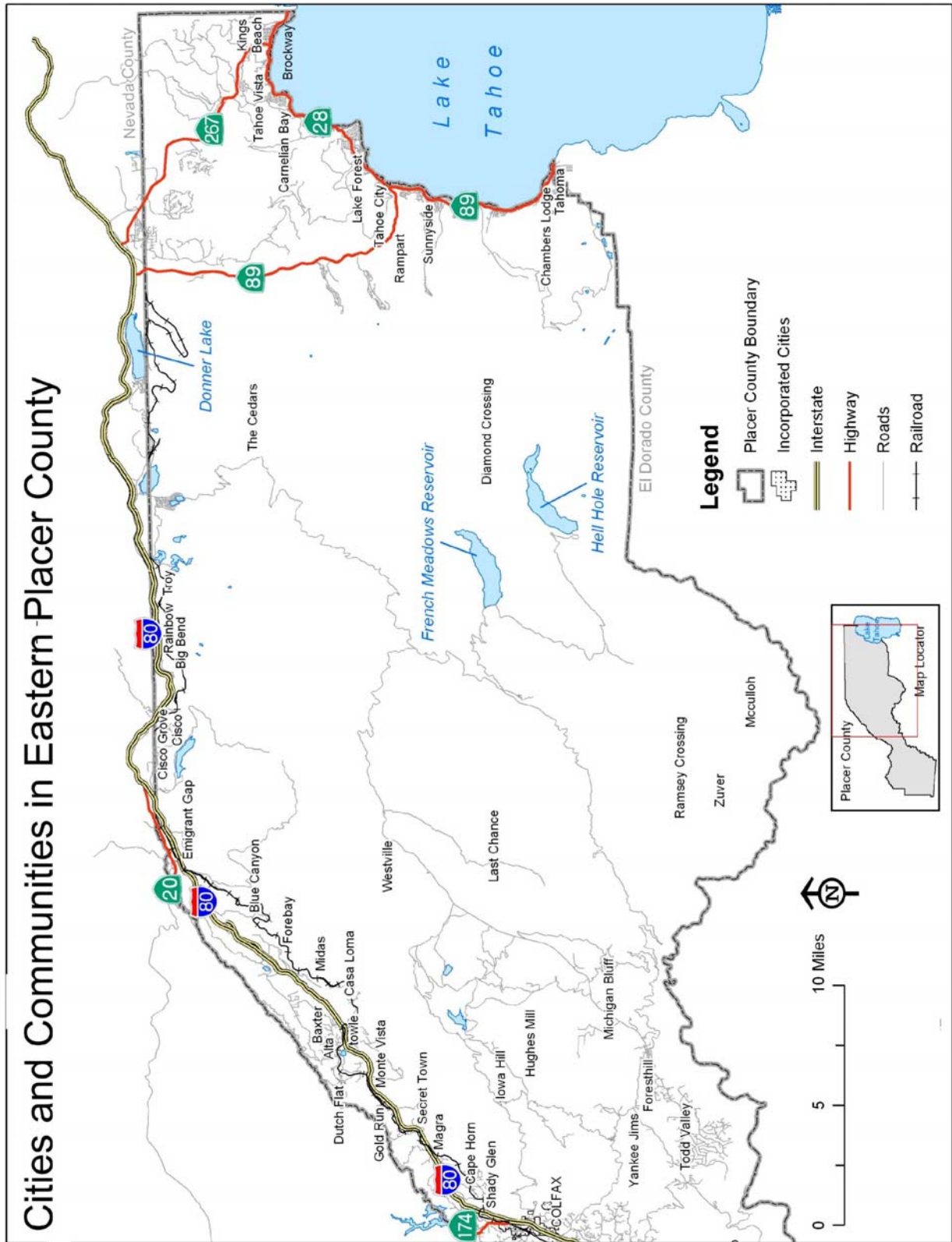


Table 3.1
Temperature and Precipitation in Placer County 1905-2009 Monthly Normal

| Area | Average Maximum Temperature | Average Minimum Temperature | Average Total Precipitation | Average Total Snowfall |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Rocklin | 74.7°F | 45.4°F | 22.8" | 0.3" |
| Auburn | 72.4°F | 48.3°F | 34.3" | 1.4" |
| Colfax | 70.7°F | 46.2°F | 45.3" | 18.9" |
| Gold Run | 67.9 °F | 45.7 °F | 54.1" | 15.2" |
| Iowa Hill | 67.3 °F | 46.3 °F | 52.9" | 30.6" |
| Blue Canyon | 58.4 °F | 43.0 °F | 67.5" | 240.3" |
| Squaw Valley | 57.7 °F | 27.3 °F | 51.0" | 246.2" |
| Tahoe City | 56.0°F | 30.5°F | 31.5" | 190.4" |

Note:

1. Period of monthly climate summary 1/1/1905 to 8/31/2009.

Source:

1. Western Regional Climate Center, December 2009.

CHARACTER

Placer County's climate, geography, and historical richness contribute to an unusually high quality of life. The geography of the county encompasses the grasslands of the valley, the woodlands of the foothills, the snow-capped Sierra Nevada mountain range, and numerous rivers, lakes, state and national forests, and ski resorts. The Valley Area of Placer County represents rich agricultural lands, recreational amenities, and cultural activities. The world-famous gold Country features well-stocked lakes with tree-lined shores. Lake Tahoe, the internationally acclaimed lake in the High Country, is a place of unparalleled natural beauty and provides opportunities for water skiing, sailing, scuba diving, jet skiing, and fishing.

The comparative solitude of country living and the magnificent mountains provide a perfect retreat from urban life. Placer County offers hiking, biking, camping, snow skiing, snow boarding, horseback riding, fishing, water sports, ice skating, and hunting. In addition to the recreational opportunities, Placer County offers a diverse array of cultural attractions. South Placer is one of the fastest growing business communities in California and commercial activities and shopping opportunities are abundant. The choice of rural, urban and suburban living creates unique lifestyle opportunities for work and play.

3.2 Socio-Economic Setting

Placer County's economy is diverse and includes a mix of available jobs. The resorts in North Lake Tahoe are the leading employers in that region's growing tourism industry. In the South Placer area, high tech companies are prominent. A list of current major employers in Placer County can be found in Appendix C. The major employment sectors in Placer County, and their share of total employment at the end of 2008, is listed in Table 3.2 below:

Table 3.2
Employment Distribution by Sector

| Employment Sector | Percent in 2008 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Construction | 9.0% |
| Financial Activities | 7.7% |
| Information | 1.7% |
| Trade, Transportation, Utilities | 20.3% |
| Natural Resources and Mining | 0.1% |
| Government | 14.5% |
| Educational and Health Services | 12.1% |
| Agriculture | 0.1% |
| Other Services | 3.7% |
| Professional and Business Services | 10.8% |
| Leisure and Hospitality | 14.2% |
| Manufacturing | 5.8% |

Source:

1. Placer County Industry Employment and Labor Force Annual Average, Employment Development Department, January 2010.

Placer County's job growth has remained relatively strong compared to California, the Bay Area, and the Sacramento area. During the 1980's and 1990's, the county's manufacturing sector grew steadily with expansion of high technology industries. Services, retail trade, and government employment sectors also increased to meet the needs of the county's expanding population base.

During the 2000 decade, the principle sectors that continued to produce jobs in are trade, transportation and utilities, government, leisure and hospitality, education and health services, professional and business services, and construction. The fastest growing sector is currently education and health services. Momentum for employment growth is also in transportation, warehousing, wholesale and retail trade, leisure and professional services. Employment in manufacturing activities has been declining since the mid-1990's. Employment in construction and financial services have declined since 2007 as housing production and homes sales fell precipitously, although construction employment is expected to rebound by 2012. Government still accounts for more than 25 percent of jobs in the Sacramento region.

The county's unemployment rate at the end of 2009 was 11.3 percent compared to a rate of 8.2 percent in December 2008; ranking 16 out of the State's 58 counties. Underemployment, such as furloughs of State workers, is not counted in these unemployment figures.

3.3 Recent Growth Trends 2000 - 2008

Placer County's communities, cultural amenities, economic opportunities, and ideal climate continue to attract new residents, workers, and businesses, creating a dynamic environment in which to plan for and implement transportation improvements. To examine how growth has impacted transportation, it is useful to examine trends that unfolded during the decade between 2000 and 2008. Table 3.3 displays some of the key growth indicators shaping travel behavior in Placer County.

Table 3.3
Summary of Placer County Growth Trends 2000 – 2008

| Characteristics | 2000 | 2008 | Percent Change |
|---|-----------|-----------|----------------|
| Demographic Characteristics | | | |
| Total Population | 248,399 | 332,608 | 33.9% |
| Male | 121,092 | 163,949 | 35.4% |
| Female | 126,507 | 168,659 | 33.3% |
| Median age (years) | 38.0 | 37.8 | -0.5% |
| Under 5 years | 15,924 | 19,905 | 25.0% |
| 18 years and over | 182,641 | 258,852 | 41.7% |
| 65 years and over | 32,560 | 49,098 | 50.8% |
| Housing Characteristics | | | |
| Total Housing Units | 107,302 | 144,813 | 35.0% |
| Occupied Housing | 93,382 | 125,967 | 34.9% |
| Owner-occupied | 68,372 | 90,424 | 32.3% |
| Renter-occupied | 25,010 | 35,543 | 42.1% |
| Vacant housing | 13,920 | 18,846 | 35.4% |
| Owner-occupied Median Value (\$) | \$213,900 | \$469,100 | 119.3% |
| Median Monthly Owner Costs with Mortgage | \$1,521 | \$2,449 | 61.0% |
| Single Family Building Permits | 4,745 | 1,389 | -70.7% |
| Multi Family Building Permits | 133 | 316 | 137.6% |
| Economic Characteristics | | | |
| Labor Force (population 16 and over) | 123,875 | 174,030 | 40.5% |
| Median Household Income | \$57,535 | \$73,260 | 27.3% |
| Median Family Income | \$68,858 | \$86,419 | 25.5% |
| Per capita income | \$27,963 | \$35,913 | 28.4% |
| Unemployment Rate | 3.20% | 8.2% | 103.1% |
| Social Characteristics | | | |
| Average Household Size | 2.63 | 2.61 | -0.8% |
| Average Family Size | 3.06 | 3.06 | 0.0% |
| Speak language other than English at home | 24,645 | 41,754 | 69.4% |
| Transportation Characteristics | | | |
| Mean travel time to work in minutes | 27.0 | 26.8 | -0.7% |
| 30 Minutes or less | 81,831 | 87,087 | 6.4% |
| 30 minutes or more | 39,056 | 57,097 | 46.2% |
| Drove Alone | 105,128 | 125,771 | 19.6% |
| Carpooled | 14,307 | 16,589 | 16.0% |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| Used Public Transportation | 1,452 | 1,824 | 25.6% |
| No Vehicle Available at Home | 5,370 | 1,517 | -71.8% |
| 1 Vehicle at Home | 31,665 | 19,707 | -37.8% |
| 2 Vehicles at Home | 42,015 | 61,880 | 47.3% |
| 3 or more Vehicles at Home | 23,068 | 54,713 | 137.2% |

Sources:

1. 2008 and 2006-2008 American Community Survey, Placer County, California,
2. American Fact Finder, U.S. Census Bureau, 2009.
3. Placer County Historical Civilian Labor Force, EDD, January 2010.
4. 2001 Supplementary Survey - Means of Transportation to Work, U.S. Census Bureau, 2002.
5. Tenure of Vehicles Available; and Travel Time for Workers, U.S. Census Bureau, 2002.
6. Historical Data for Building Permits in Placer County, EDD, February 2010.

Table 3.4 summarizes the primary commuting patterns for Placer County workers occurring from 1990 to 2000. In 2000, about 43 percent of Placer County workers commuted within the County's boundaries. About 30 percent commuted to surrounding counties; and surrounding counties contributed about 27 percent of the workers commuting into Placer County.

Table 3.4

Summary of Primary Commuting Patterns in Placer County from 1990 to 2000

| Area of Residence | Area of Work Place | 1990 Number of Workers | 2000 Number of Workers | Percent Increase |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Placer County | Placer County | 46,601 | 69,554 | 49.3% |
| Placer County | Sacramento County | 27,818 | 35,458 | 27.5% |
| Sacramento County | Placer County | 15,969 | 29,788 | 86.5% |
| Nevada County | Placer County | 3,532 | 5,215 | 47.7% |
| El Dorado County | Placer County | 1,838 | 3,663 | 99.3% |
| Placer County | Yolo County | 1,413 | 2,497 | 76.7% |
| Placer County | Nevada County | 1,072 | 1,877 | 75.1% |
| Yuba County | Placer County | 566 | 1,694 | 199.3% |
| Sutter County | Placer County | 447 | 1,487 | 232.7% |
| Placer County | Washoe County , NV | 989 | 1,040 | 5.2% |
| Placer County | El Dorado County | 594 | 872 | 46.8% |
| Placer County / Elsewhere | Elsewhere / Placer County | 5628 | 8260 | 46.8% |
| | Total | 106,467 | 161,405 | 51.6% |

Note: 1990 and 2000 US Census data compiled by EDD.

Source:

1. Historical Data for Commuting Patterns in Placer County, California Labor Market Info, EDD, February 2010.

3.4 Growth Assumptions

As the Regional Information Center for the Sacramento area, the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) prepared population, housing, and employment forecasts for the

development of the MTP 2035. The SACOG Board of Directors adopted a revised set of forecasts in September 2007 for years 2013, 2018 and 2035. These forecasts are the basis of the growth assumptions for the 2035 RTP update. Appendix D summarizes the process and assumptions used by SACOG to develop the land use allocation for the MTP 2035.

The population, housing, and employment forecasts reflect the growth that is anticipated to occur within Placer County during the twenty-five year horizon of this plan. SACOG develops the regional population, housing, and employment forecasts in consultation with member local jurisdictions, the 2000 census, the State Department of Finance, the State Employment Development Department, and the State Department of Housing and Community Development. The requirements for coordination between SACOG and state agencies have been strengthened by SB375.

SACOG typically updates its growth projections on four-year cycles. The State Department of Finance does not plan to update its official long-range state and county growth forecast (adopted in 2007) until after the 2010 census is completed, anticipated in 2013. The State plans to release amended population and housing projections benchmarked to the 2010 census by June 2011. SACOG's anticipates adoption of a revised set of the regional growth forecasts to occur by December 2011. Estimates will be provided for several near-term years: 2011, 2014, 2017, 2018 and 2025 to address federal Clean Air Act requirements; and 2020 to address state SB375 requirements. The revised growth forecast will include fewer dwelling units and jobs than the 2035 MTP.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population forecasts are household population only and are based on persons per household rates by housing type. Households represent about 95 percent of total housing units, with the average persons per household at 2.62 people. Population forecasts are identified milestone year increments and reflect the net increase and percent growth of each jurisdiction, as shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5
Population Projections by Jurisdiction 2005-2035

| | 2005 | 2009 | 2013 | 2018 | 2035 | Net Increase | % Growth |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|----------|
| Auburn | 13,942 | 13,432 | 16,572 | 15,438 | 17,985 | 4,043 | 29% |
| Colfax | 3,320 | 1,878 | 3,530 | 3,677 | 4,246 | 926 | 28% |
| Lincoln | 29,322 | 40,060 | 58,253 | 56,802 | 112,209 | 82,887 | 283% |
| Loomis | 6,910 | 6,677 | 6,809 | 7,425 | 8,336 | 1,426 | 21% |
| Rocklin | 50,251 | 54,754 | 58,599 | 62,106 | 69,155 | 18,904 | 38% |
| Roseville | 102,215 | 112,343 | 139,358 | 149,683 | 172,500 | 70,285 | 69% |
| Unincorp. ¹ | 93,912 | 97,310 | 110,647 | 129,311 | 186,278 | 92,366 | 98% |
| County Total | 299,872 | 326,454 | 393,768 | 424,441 | 570,709 | 270,837 | 90% |

Notes:

¹ Population estimates for 2005 and 2009 are household population only and are based on persons per household rates by housing type, using DOF 2009 occupancy rates.

² Excludes the unincorporated area of the Tahoe Basin that falls within TRPA planning area.

Sources:

1. SACOG Projections for MTP 2035, Population Growth and Distribution, 2005 – 2035 by Jurisdiction, September 2007.
2. SACOG Forecast Data 2009.
3. Table E-1: City / County Population Estimated January 1, 2008 to January 1, 2009, Department of Finance (DOF).

EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

The employment forecasts were derived from the expected increase in building square footage or acreage factor consistent with each local general plan. SACOG converted the building square footage or acreage factor into employment using calculated holding capacities consistent with those assumed for the local general plans. Employment forecasts are identified in milestone year increments and reflect the net increase and percent growth of each jurisdiction, as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6
Employment Projections by Jurisdiction 2005-2035

| | 2005 | 2009 | 2013 | 2018 | 2035 | Net Increase | % Growth |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|----------|
| Auburn | 8,153 | 7,800 | 8,259 | 8,280 | 8,525 | 372 | 5% |
| Colfax | 1,081 | 900 | 1,263 | 1,500 | 1,925 | 844 | 78% |
| Lincoln | 7,994 | 6,200 | 17,923 | 21,950 | 38,426 | 30,432 | 381% |
| Loomis | 3,762 | 4,000 | 4,022 | 4,347 | 4,822 | 1,060 | 28% |
| Rocklin | 15,427 | 23,800 | 19,801 | 21,340 | 27,297 | 11,870 | 77% |
| Roseville | 60,167 | 48,000 | 79,805 | 83,439 | 100,395 | 40,228 | 67% |
| Unincorp. ¹ | 34,864 | 56,300 | 44,126 | 46,093 | 66,062 | 31,198 | 90% |
| County Total | 131,448 | 147,000 | 175,199 | 186,949 | 247,452 | 116,004 | 88% |

Notes:

¹ Excludes the unincorporated area of the Tahoe Basin that falls within the TRPA planning area.

Sources:

1. SACOG Projections for MTP 2035, Population Growth and Distribution, 2005 – 2035 by Jurisdiction, September 2007.
2. SACOG Forecast Data 2009.
3. Monthly Labor Force Data for Cities and Census Designated Places – December 2009 Preliminary, EDD, January 2010.

HOUSING PROJECTIONS

Housing forecasts are identified in milestone year increments and reflect the net increase and percent growth of each jurisdiction, as shown in Table 3.7. The forecasts assume a five percent vacancy rate, although the current rate is substantially higher due the effects of the recession and mortgage crisis.

**Table 3.7
Housing Projections by Jurisdiction 2005-2035**

| | 2005 | 2009 | 2013 | 2018 | 2035 | Net Increase | % Growth |
|------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|----------|
| Auburn | 6,144 | 6,034 | 6,540 | 6,887 | 7,872 | 1,728 | 28% |
| Colfax | 1,371 | 820 | 1,460 | 1,584 | 1,813 | 442 | 32% |
| Lincoln | 10,506 | 17,772 | 23,515 | 24,840 | 40,916 | 30,410 | 289% |
| Loomis | 2,304 | 2,462 | 2,494 | 2,710 | 3,223 | 919 | 40% |
| Rocklin | 19,658 | 21,216 | 22,542 | 23,891 | 26,907 | 7,249 | 37% |
| Roseville | 42,418 | 46,230 | 53,930 | 59,708 | 72,735 | 30,317 | 71% |
| Unincorp. ¹ | 37,410 | 54,731 | 45,091 | 52,697 | 76,067 | 38,657 | 103% |
| County Total | 119,811 | 149,265 | 155,572 | 172,317 | 229,533 | 109,722 | 92% |

Notes:

¹ Excludes the unincorporated area of the Tahoe Basin that falls within the TRPA planning area.

Sources:

1. SACOG Projections for MTP 2035, Population Growth and Distribution, 2005 – 2035 by Jurisdiction, September 2007.
2. SACOG Forecast Data 2009.
3. SACOG Population, Housing and Household Estimates 2000 – 2009, May 2009.

JOBS TO HOUSING BALANCE

Jobs/housing balance refers to the relationship of residences to jobs in a given area. Assuming a reasonable match between the affordability of housing and the incomes of jobs in the local area, if the number and proximity of residences is proportionate to the number and proximity of jobs, the majority of the employees would have the opportunity to work and reside in the same area. A well balanced ratio of jobs and housing can contribute to reductions in the number of vehicle trips, less congestion on area roadways and intersections, and lower levels of air pollutant emissions due to employment opportunities in closer proximity to residential areas.

SACOG calculates an area's jobs to housing ratios using total employment divided by total housing units. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a jobs rich jurisdiction; likewise, a ratio less than one indicate a housing rich jurisdiction. Jobs to housing ratios are identified for each jurisdiction for 2005 and 2035, as shown in Table 3.8.

**Table 3.8
Jobs to Housing Ratios
by Jurisdiction 2005-2035**

| Jurisdiction | 2005 | 2035 |
|------------------------|------|------|
| Colfax | 0.8 | 1.1 |
| Lincoln | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Loomis | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| Rocklin | 0.8 | 1.0 |
| Roseville | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| Unincorp. ¹ | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Total | 1.1 | 1.1 |

Notes: ¹ Excludes the unincorporated area of the Tahoe Basin that falls within the TRPA planning area.

Source:

1. SACOG Projections for MTP 2035, Population Growth and Distribution, 2005 – 2035 by Jurisdiction.
2. SACOG Forecast Data 2009.

COMPARISON OF 2035 PROJECTIONS TO 2050 BLUEPRINT PREFERRED SCENARIO

Table 3.9 shows the adopted 2035 growth projections as a percentage of the 2050 Blueprint Preferred Scenario growth projections for each jurisdiction.

Table 3.9
**2035 Growth as a Percentage
of 2050 Blueprint Growth**

| | Employees | Housing Units |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| Auburn | 28% | 50% |
| Colfax | 54% | 37% |
| Lincoln | 56% | 62% |
| Loomis | 70% | 60% |
| Rocklin | 32% | 63% |
| Roseville | 46% | 80% |
| Unincorp. ¹ | 57% | 64% |
| Total | 47% | 67% |

Notes: ¹ Excludes the unincorporated area of the Tahoe Basin that falls within the TRPA planning area.

Source:

1. SACOG Projections for MTP 2035, Population Growth and Distribution, 2005 – 2035 by Jurisdiction.
2. SACOG Forecast Data 2009.

3.5 Other Recent Economic Forecasts

Table 3.10 presents the Placer County Economic Forecast as projected through 2035. This forecast is updated annually by Caltrans. This forecast tracks closely to the recent set of projections prepared for SACOG by the Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy. In the near-term (through 2015) Placer County is expected to lead growth in the State due to relative affordability and higher production of homes.

Table 3.10
Placer County Economic Forecast 2005 - 2035

| Year | Population | Net Migration | Registered Vehicles (1000) | Households (1000) | New Homes Permitted | Total Taxable Sales (Billions) | Personal Income (Billions) | Real Per Capita Income (Dollars) | Inflation Rate (Percent Change in CPI) | Employment Total Wage & Salary (1000) | Unemployment Rate (Percent) |
|------|------------|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2005 | 313,496 | 9,554 | 357.5 | 120.0 | 5,294 | \$7.26 | \$13.2 | \$46,783 | 2.0 | 137.3 | 4.3 |
| 2009 | 344,226 | 3,826 | 366.5 | 133.2 | 1,283 | \$6.53 | \$15.7 | \$45,747 | 0.8 | 129.4 | 11.3 |
| 2010 | 348,565 | 3,000 | 365.6 | 134.0 | 1,844 | \$6.64 | \$16.5 | \$46,419 | 2.1 | 130.6 | 10.5 |
| 2015 | 386,096 | 7,417 | 394.9 | 148.9 | 3,895 | \$8.81 | \$22.6 | \$51,436 | 2.2 | 151.9 | 5.7 |
| 2020 | 427,965 | 7,062 | 441.7 | 166.3 | 3,875 | \$11.87 | \$30.1 | \$55,438 | 2.1 | 171.4 | 5.0 |
| 2025 | 470,050 | 7,079 | 492.6 | 184.2 | 3,785 | \$15.78 | \$38.8 | \$57,434 | 2.5 | 191.5 | 4.6 |
| 2030 | 510,613 | 6,916 | 542.1 | 201.8 | 3,735 | \$20.62 | \$49.7 | \$59,423 | 2.7 | 211.1 | 4.5 |
| 2035 | 549,269 | 6,643 | 588.9 | 218.7 | 3,576 | \$26.28 | \$62.1 | \$60,508 | 2.7 | 229.4 | 4.6 |

Notes:

1. Caltrans County level forecast project was initiated in 2000 to assist local and regional agencies in their planning and travel forecasting efforts. The project provides near and long-term forecasts for each county and are updated annually; this forecast was conducted from November 2009 through February 2010.
2. The long-term forecast is based on the extrapolation of the near term forecast. The forecast responds to how economic indicators might reasonably grow over time, consistent with reasonable assumptions about population and housing growth and the growth of the U.S. and California economies.

Source: Long-Term Socio-Economic Forecasts by County, Placer County 2010, Office of Transportation Economic, Caltrans, March 2010.