

PLACER PARKWAY CORRIDOR PRESERVATION PROJECT

Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR)

Description of “Tiering”

Plans for large infrastructure projects are developed over many years, with increasing detail available as the planning process moves forward. To make sure that environmental analysis is included and considered as early in the process as feasible, federal and State environmental laws allow for a tiered environmental review. “Tiering” is a streamlining concept for large infrastructure projects with several stages or phases. It is a way to focus environmental studies during the planning process at the same level of detail as the plans.

The first tier document (Tier 1) allows an agency to focus on broad environmental issues, which may correlate directly to early planning decisions, such as the type, the general location, and major design features of a project. Second tier (Tier 2) documents involve environmental analyses and review that address a narrower geographic area, a more focused set of issues, and a specific proposed action. A Tier 2 document relies on a summary of the work in the Tier 1 document, thereby avoiding unnecessary repetition. This also allows the Tier 2 document to be focused on the additional details available in later stages of project planning such as design, construction, and operation of the proposed project.

A Tier 1 environmental review was identified as appropriate for the Placer Parkway Corridor Preservation Project because the choice of a corridor alignment must first be considered in its regional context, as it influences roadway networks, future planning processes, and environmental issues spanning portions of two counties, several jurisdictions, and multiple independent planning processes. Given the existing and projected rapid growth in and around the study area, it is vital to identify an appropriate corridor alignment as early as feasible, so that planning decisions can consider the future Placer Parkway, and before new development reduces corridor alignment options or increases right-of-way acquisition costs.