

# NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

August 19, 2016

## **Butte County Association of Governments 2016 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy**

Notice is hereby given that the Butte County Association of Governments (BCAG) as the lead agency has prepared an Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the 2016 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy ("RTP-SCS"). The 2016 RTP-SCS is intended to guide future transportation projects and to facilitate a land use scenario for the region that is consistent with the requirements of Senate Bill 375 (SB 375).

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The geographical extent of the proposed 2016 RTP-SCS includes the area within the limits of Butte County, California, including the incorporated cities of Chico, Oroville, Biggs, Gridley and Paradise and all unincorporated areas under the jurisdiction of the County of Butte (see attached Figure). Transportation improvement projects identified in the 2016 RTP-SCS are located on State Route (SR) 99, SR 70, SR 32, SR 149, SR 162, and SR 191, county roads and locally owned streets, as well as on airport property, railroad corridors, transit district property, public lands (such as recreation areas or state/federal forests), and public utility lands (such as easement areas).

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** BCAG is soliciting comments on the adequacy and completeness of the analysis and proposed mitigation measures described in the Draft 2016 RTP-SCS Environmental Impact Report (EIR). You may submit written comments to BCAG prior to the close of public comment which ends on October 18th, 2016, at 4:00 p.m. In addition, you may comment by providing testimony at a public meeting at the BCAG Board Meeting on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 9:00 a.m., at the City of Chico Council Chambers, 411 Main St, Chico, California or at the BCAG Board Meeting on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 at 9:00 a.m., at the Town of Paradise Council Chambers, 5555 Skyway, Paradise, California.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** BCAG, as both the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and the State-designated regional transportation planning agency (RTPA) for Butte County, is required by both federal and State law to prepare a long-range (at least 20-year) transportation planning document known as a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP is an action-oriented document used to achieve a coordinated and balanced regional transportation system. California Government Code §65080 et seq. and Title 23 United States Code (USC) §134 require Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPA) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to prepare long-range transportation plans to: 1) establish regional goals, 2) identify present and future needs, deficiencies and constraints, 3) analyze potential solutions, 4) estimate available funding, and 5) propose investments. State Statutes require that the RTP serve as the foundation for the short-range transportation planning documents: the Regional and Federal Transportation Improvement Programs (RTIP and FTIP).

BCAG has the responsibility to prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as part of the RTP, pursuant to the requirements of California Senate Bill 375 as adopted in 2008. The SCS sets forth a forecasted development pattern for the region, which, when integrated with the transportation network and other transportation measures and policies, is intended to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicles and light trucks to achieve the regional GHG reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (ARB).

Under both federal and State law, BCAG must update its RTP every four years. The 2016 RTP-SCS is the long-range planning, policy, action, and financial document for the Butte County Region. The RTP-SCS covers a 24-year period from 2016 to 2040 and is an update of the 2012 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) (please note for the 2016 cycle, the plan will be called "Regional Transportation Plan" instead of "Metropolitan Transportation Plan" as it was in 2012).

The RTP-SCS identifies the region's transportation needs and issues and sets forth actions, programs, and projects to address those needs and issues. The RTP-SCS adopts policies, sets goals, and identifies financial resources to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of a regional intermodal transportation system that would serve the mobility needs of goods and people. In addition, as the MPO for Butte County, BCAG is required to prepare a SCS that demonstrates how GHG reduction targets will be met through integrated land use, housing, and transportation planning. Thus the RTP-SCS will address both the transportation component of the RTP, as well as the land use component of the SCS. It should be noted that BCAG does not propose any land use changes, but rather the land use patterns envisioned by the RTP-SCS are based on the General Plan land use designations of the local agencies (the five incorporated cities and the county). The RTP-SCS would be consistent with the land use and zoning designations in the incorporated and unincorporated areas.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FINDINGS:** BCAG has prepared a Draft Program EIR pursuant to requirements of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR has been prepared because of the potential for unavoidable, significant adverse effects resulting from program implementation. The EIR prepared for the 2016 RTP-SCS identifies and discusses potential impacts, mitigation measures, residual impacts, and monitoring requirements. Significant and unavoidable effects on the environment are anticipated in the following areas:

- Agricultural Resources;
- Cultural Resources – Historic Resources.

If the project description changes, BCAG will require a reevaluation of the EIR to consider the changes. If you challenge this environmental document in court, you may be limited to raising only those issues raised by you or others in written correspondence or in hearings on the proposed 2016 RTP-SCS.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** If a copy of the EIR is not attached, the EIR may be obtained online at <http://www.bcag.org/Planning/RTP--SCS/index.html> or at any of the following locations in Butte County:

BCAG Office  
326 Huss Dr., Ste. 150  
Chico, CA 95928  
530.809.4616

Chico Library  
1108 Sherman Ave  
Chico, CA 95926  
530.891.2726

Gridley Library  
299 Spruce Street  
Gridley, CA 95948  
530.846.3323

Paradise Library  
5922 Clark Road  
Paradise, CA 95969  
530.872.6320

Biggs  
464A B Street  
Biggs, CA 95917  
530.868.5724

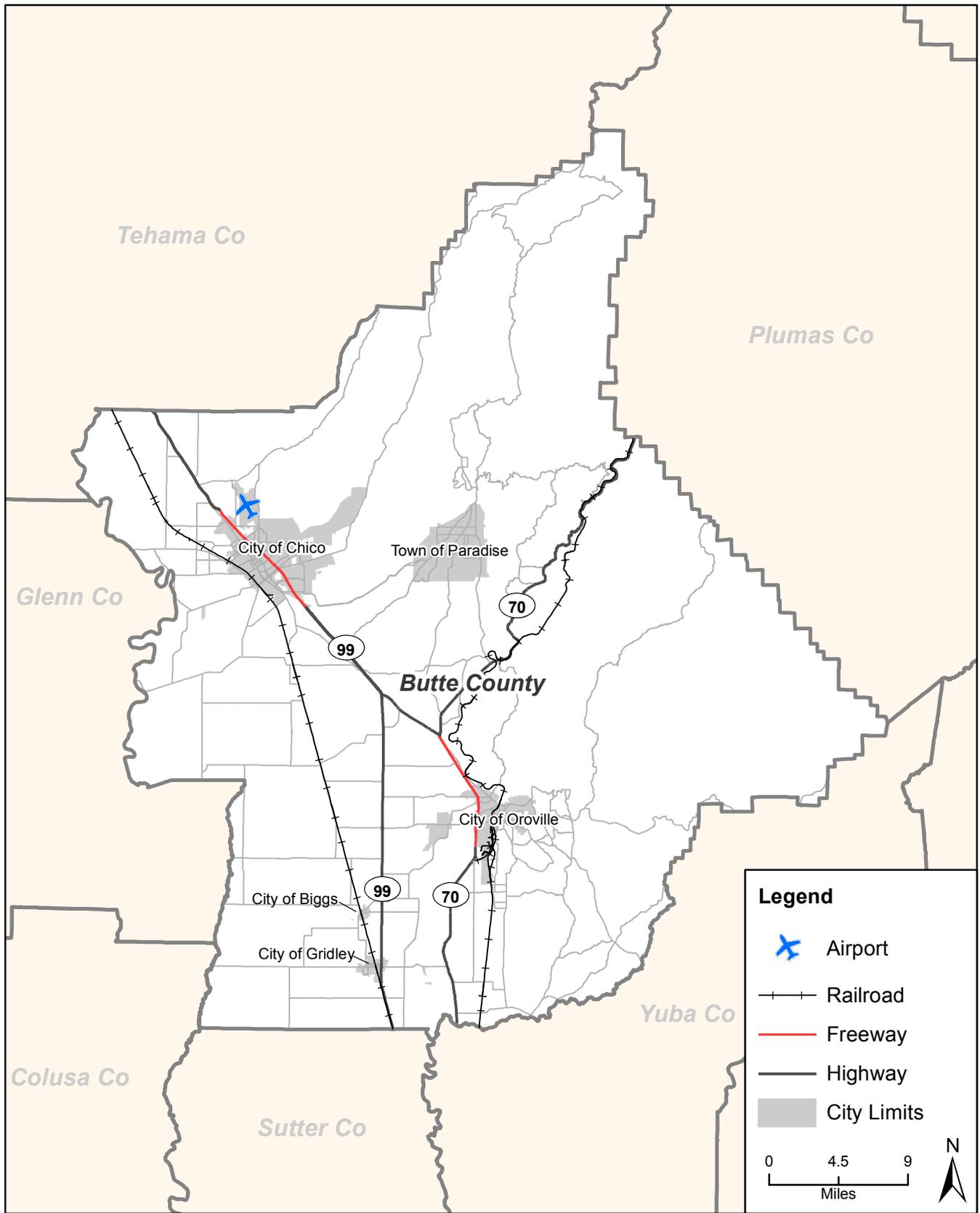
Durham Library  
2545 Durham-Dayton Hwy  
Durham, CA 95938  
530.879.3835

Oroville Library  
1820 Mitchell Ave.  
Oroville, CA 95966  
530.538.7641

**HOW TO COMMENT:** Because of the time sensitive nature of the regional transportation planning process, we request your response at the earliest possible date. Mail comments to:

**Brian Lasagna, Regional Analyst**  
**Butte County Association of Governments**  
**326 Huss Dr, Suite 150**  
**Chico, CA 95928**  
**[blasagna@bcag.org](mailto:blasagna@bcag.org)**

If representing an agency, please identify the agency name and appropriate contact name, phone number, and email address. Comments from the public must include name, phone number, and email or postal address. Please limit comments to environmental issues evaluated in the Draft EIR such as traffic, biology, noise, etc. You will receive notice of the dates of future public meetings to consider project approval or denial.



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Additional data provided by BCAG, 2015.

RTP-SCS Plan Area

Figure 1