Lemmon Drive Traffic Improvements and Resiliency Project Environmental Assessment Summary

The Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County (RTC Washoe), in cooperation with the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing improvements to Lemmon Drive in the City of Reno, Washoe County, Nevada. The Lemmon Drive Traffic Improvements and Resiliency Project involves realigning 3.7 miles of Lemmon Drive to reconstruct a safer and more resilient roadway between Fleetwood Drive and Ramsey Way.

Purpose and Need: The purpose of the Lemmon Drive Traffic Improvements and Resiliency project is to provide reliable community access, reduce travel delays, improve multimodal access, and provide enhanced safety. The need to improve this segment of Lemmon Drive is demonstrated by: unpredictable travel delays caused by flooding events, providing safe access for all multimodal users, meeting 2050 RTP regional needs, and reducing maintenance costs and burdens on Washoe County and the City of Reno during flood events.

Preferred (Build) Alternative: The Preferred (Build) Alternative would reconstruct and raise the existing roadway profile from Fleetwood Drive to Palace Drive along the existing alignment. Improvements would be provided at the intersections of Fleetwood Drive, Patrician Drive, Arkansas Street, Chickadee Drive, Arizona Street, Oregon Drive, and Palace Drive as a part of the Preferred Alternative. Just north of Deodar Way, the roadway alignment would shift west of the existing roadway. This allows the roadway to be constructed above the existing Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year flood elevation. Near Oregon Drive, the roadway alignment would shift back into the existing alignment with reconstruction extending to Ramsey Way.

Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Resource	Summary of Impacts	Mitigation Measures Summary
Cultural Resources (Section 3.1.1)	The project design was assessed for direct and indirect effects to National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible historic properties, and it was determined the project would have No Adverse Effect.	None
Hazardous Materials (Section 3.1.2)	No impact	None
Air Quality (Section 3.1.3)	No impact	Construction of the project is anticipated to disturb more than a quarter acre of land, therefore, the project will be required to obtain a Dust Control Operating Permit from the Northern Nevada Public Health Air Quality Management Division.
Traffic Noise (Section 3.1.4)	No impact	None
Section 4(f) & 6(f) (Section 3.1.5)	No impact	None

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Land Use and Socioeconomics (Section 3.2)	The Preferred Alternative would require partial property acquisitions that would not result in any displacement. Residences and businesses would be affected by intermittent noise, vibration, dust, traffic congestion, and visual changes for a portion of this time when construction occurs near neighborhoods. Drivers on Lemmon Drive would experience lane closures and slower travel times for the duration of construction.	Residents (both owners and tenants) and businesses are protected by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Uniform Act). As required by the Uniform Act, RTC will pay fair market value for any property acquired. RTC will develop a plan to communicate with the public and property owners regarding construction schedule, street closures, and detours throughout construction. Access to residences and businesses will be maintained during construction.
Floodplains and Water Resources (Section 3.3)	The project is located at the downstream end of the closed Swan Lake Basin. Washoe County, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designated representative for administration of the Flood Control Act, determined that given its location and design, the project would not require a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMAR). The Build Alternative was overlaid onto the current FEMA floodplains. Impacts to floodplains would results from widening the existing berm for the relocated Lemmon Drive which would introduce fill into the floodplain. Washoe County ordinances require volumetric mitigation within the floodplain at a ration of 1.3 cubic yard of excavation for every 1 cubic yard of fill placed as mitigation for fill placement and additional impervious surfaces constructed within the closed basin. The Preferred Alternative would result in negligible impacts to water quality due to added improvements like curbs, gutters, and culverts to manage runoff. The project maintains existing drainage patterns and utilizes erosion control measures to prevent pollution and maintain water quality.	During final design, the drainage design will ensure that runoff from the widened and relocated Lemmon Drive is adequately collected by the drainage system that includes drop inlets, storm drain, channels and culverts, and conveyed to mitigation basins and in a manner that maintains historic drainage patterns to the maximum extent practical. Approximately 68 acre-feet of volumetric mitigation would be required. Final volumetric mitigation will be confirmed during final design. During final design, drainage design will ensure that there are no water quality impacts draining to Swan Lake. The NDOT Construction Site BMP Manual and Stormwater Quality Manuals identify numerous best management practice (BMP) measures that may be implemented. During final design and pre-construction, NDOT, the construction contractor, and NDEP will evaluate the Preferred Alternative and identify which BMPs will be implemented. RTC Washoe's construction contractor must file a Notice of Intent with NDEP's Bureau of Water Pollution Control to obtain coverage under the General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPP) will be developed before the Notice of Intent is submitted.

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Biological Resources (Section 3.4)	The construction of the Preferred Alternative would result in approximately 220.43 acres of impacts, with the majority of these impacts being temporary (116.91 acres) and the remainder being permanent (103.52 acres). Permanent impacts would occur within the road alignment footprint and areas designated for volumetric mitigation to mitigate flooding issues. Temporary impacts would result from temporary disturbance of areas through grading or similar activities and will be mitigated by the restoration of native vegetation once work is complete. Although no active nests were observed during surveys of the study area, some habitat types within the study area contain suitable nesting habitat for migratory birds. These habitats include areas of shrubland, riparian zones, and open water. Construction activities, particularly during the breeding season (March 1 – July 31), have the potential to disturb nesting birds, leading to displacement or abandonment of nests.	Construction activities can impact nesting migratory birds, especially during the nesting season (March 1 – July 31) when noise may cause birds to flee their nests. Nesting surveys must be conducted on all Contractor staging areas, including stockpiles. Materials containing nests cannot be used until cleared by a biologist. Protect stockpile openings, like culverts, to prevent wildlife nesting. Minimize construction during nesting season, but if unavoidable, follow these guidelines: • Within seven days before construction, a qualified biologist must survey for active nests within the construction zone and 500 feet beyond. • If active nests are found, establish setbacks before starting construction (25 feet for urban-adapted species, up to 500 feet for raptors) Identify and protect large trees and shrubs where feasible. Clearing vegetation can increase noxious weeds and reduce prey species for raptors, other birds, and pollinators. If vegetation is removed, restore forage and nesting habitats by re-seeding with native species (forbs and shrubs) to support monarch butterflies and other invertebrates. Implement noise reduction strategies, such as using quieter equipment and scheduling noisy activities outside of critical wildlife breeding seasons. Establish buffer zones around sensitive habitats, and where feasible, use noise barriers or acoustic screens. Designate specific routes and staging areas for vehicle and equipment movement to minimize impacts. Apply dust suppression measures, such as water spraying, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Use soil stabilizers or mulching on exposed soil surfaces to minimize dust generation.

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Biological Resources (Section 3.4) continued		RTC Washoe's contractor will develop and follow a Noxious Weed Management Plan to prevent the establishment and spread of Nevada State-listed noxious weeds per Nevada Revised Statute 555.
Visual Resources (Section 3.5)	The realigned roadway would be further away from the existing roadway for the majority of the project limits, which results in a less prominent view than existing conditions. Therefore, the potential for the Preferred Alternative to cause impacts to visual resources, viewers, or visual quality is negligible. The realigned roadway would be located approximately 1.5 miles east of the Swan Lake Conservation Area trails and boardwalk would not be noticeable to users of this recreation area. Streets lights installed at the new intersections of the realigned Lemmon Drive with Arkansas Street, Chickadee Drive, and Arizona Street would introduce a minor amount of additional light to nighttime views of the realigned roadway. The Preferred Alternative is not expected to result in a substantial increase in light and glare at night.	Impacts to visual resources will be mitigated through landscaping and aesthetic enhancements.