

incorporated areas of Corona, Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, Hemet, San Jacinto, Perris, Moreno Valley, and Riverside. Combined, the cities account for a population of over 300,000 and for over 170,000 jobs. Development also has been occurring rapidly within the unincorporated portions of the corridor.

Table 1.A shows the year 2000 and projected 2025 population and employment for cities within the study area and for the unincorporated areas of Riverside County, as provided by the cities to the Western Riverside Council of Governments (WRCOG). The table shows the growth for cities as a whole, not just the portion of the cities located within the immediate study area. The growth projection shows increases in population in the range of eight percent to almost 400 percent, and increases associated with the HCLE Corridor in employment in the range of 32 percent to over 400 percent. The greatest percentage increase associated with the HCLE Corridor is in the cities of Lake Elsinore, Perris, and San Jacinto. The corridor also serves a substantial part of western Riverside County's unincorporated area, where population and employment are expected to nearly double between now and 2025.

1.5 Project Need

The rapid land use conversion from vacant and agricultural to developed subdivisions and commercial properties has outpaced improvements to the transportation infrastructure in western Riverside County. In western Riverside County overall, the population is expected to increase by over one million persons between 2000 and 2025, a more than 70 percent increase. Although currently funded transportation improvements will address some of the current and projected increased future demand, additional transportation improvements are needed to provide for the efficient mobility of goods and people over the long-term planning horizon to 2025 and beyond.

Without transportation improvements beyond those currently planned in western Riverside County, there will be inadequate access to the regional transportation system, increased local and regional traffic congestion, and inadequate mobility on existing facilities, including regional highways and local arterials within the study area in the future. There is a lack of an efficient east-west connection to address the projected movement of people and goods 25 years from now within the interior of western Riverside County.

1.5.1 Problem of Limitations in East-West Access to Current and Future Employment Locations

Transportation infrastructure improvements are necessary within the HCLE Corridor to address the projected job growth in western Riverside County, and to improve access to future employment centers. Traffic patterns on the major east-west transportation