

- C Extension of Newport Road westward to Domenigoni Parkway as a four-lane arterial to complete an east-west connection at the southern end of this corridor. However, facilities parallel to it, such as SR-74 between I-215 and Hemet, continue to operate at LOS F1 in year 2020.

1.6 Project Purpose

A copy of the statement of purpose and need as agreed to by the agencies participating in the NEPA/404 Memorandum of Understanding is provided in Appendix C of this EIS/EIR. The purpose of the proposed action in the HCLE Corridor is:

“to provide multimodal transportation improvements that will help alleviate future traffic demands and congestion and improve the east-west movement of people and goods across western Riverside County.”¹

It is anticipated that the selected CETAP alternative for the HCLE Corridor will reduce travel time between Hemet and Corona/Lake Elsinore in the future compared to future conditions without implementation of the proposed action. In addition, it is anticipated that the selected alternative will reduce future traffic volume and congestion on SR-91 and SR-60/I-215 in the City of Riverside and improve average study area traffic speed.

The intent of this Draft EIS/EIR is to fulfill the Tier 1 NEPA requirement of FHWA to support the commitment of federal funds to the CETAP planning effort. The Tier 2 level environmental documentation will address FHWA’s NEPA requirements for approving connections to the interstate highway system and approving federal funds for project construction.

1.7 Regional Planning Context

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) in 2001, provides a blue print for future transportation improvements in its six county region.² The RTP policies for western Riverside County reflect the goal to implement regional transportation improvements. These improvements are intended to satisfy future traffic demand in western Riverside County and achieve SCAG’s long-range transportation planning goals to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality within the region. The RTP is updated every three years.

The RTP, developed in accordance with established federal requirements and policies, sets forth a multimodal, financially feasible planning strategy for southern California, including Riverside County. In addition, the RTP presents transportation policies and improvements necessary for achieving mobility goals to year 2025, taking projected population growth and economic factors into account.

¹ Purpose and Need Statement for the Riverside County Integrated Project, Winchester to Temecula Corridor, July 13, 2001.

² The SCAG region includes the counties of Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Imperial.