

3.1 Land Use

Each of the HCLE Corridor alternatives runs through incorporated cities, unincorporated communities, and rural Riverside County in which existing land uses are determined by Specific and General Plans. This analysis evaluates existing land uses in the study area of the transportation system proposed under CETAP. The analysis is based on the most current GIS data and conditions described in Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Existing Setting Report (LSA, 1999), although they may not reflect recent changes in existing land use. Recent site visits, for example, confirm the ongoing conversion of agricultural land to residential and commercial uses since the aerial photographs were taken in June, 2000.

There are two components of the affected environment for land use: planned land use, as defined by the General Plans, and the existing land use. Planned land use within the HCLE Corridor is defined largely by the new Riverside County General Plan. Planned land use within portions of the HCLE Corridor is also reflected in the adopted General Plans of the Cities of Corona, Riverside, Perris, Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, and Moreno Valley. Existing land use reflects the land uses on the ground as they currently exist, regardless of the long-term plans for the area.

3.1.1 Riverside County General Plan

The RCIP is a joint undertaking by Riverside County and RCTC. The components of the RCIP include the CETAP corridors (a total of two corridors internal to Riverside County and two inter-county corridors), a new Riverside County General Plan, and a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) for western Riverside County. The purpose of the RCIP is to integrate the processes of planning land uses, transportation improvements, and the preservation of habitat for endangered species. An important objective of the RCIP is to accommodate projected population growth by focusing development within areas that will be readily accessible, will provide a good quality of life for future residents, and will minimize environmental and community impacts.

One of the foundational documents to the RCIP is the *Vision for Riverside County*, approved by the Board of Supervisors in January, 2000. This document incorporates a set of 15 Consensus Planning Principles, drafted and endorsed by a coalition of County stakeholders, and intended to guide the work of the RCIP. The Vision Statement contains several objectives relating to the importance of the creation of jobs in the County, supporting economic growth, and improving the jobs/housing balance.

One of the key concepts of the new Riverside County General Plan, as identified in Chapter 3, is to “accommodate a multimodal transportation system that serves an expanding population and is integrated with a variety of land uses through transit-adaptive development and infrastructure.” The CETAP corridors, including the two corridors internal to Riverside County (Winchester to Temecula and Hemet to Corona/Lake Elsinore) are consistent with this concept. Both corridor studies consider the development of major multimodal transportation facilities to support mobility of both people and goods, and the related economic development, in western Riverside County. The expectation is that at least one of the alternatives under consideration will be selected for further development in each corridor. The Circulation Element identifies the two internal corridors, and seeks to preserve the future right-of-way for these

facilities. General Plan policy C7.2 states that the County will “Work with property owners to reserve right-of-way for potential CETAP corridors through site design, dedication, and land acquisition, as appropriate.”

The new Riverside County General Plan was released for public review in April, 2002. The intent of the General Plan is to effectively manage the overall pattern of development in Riverside County. Detailed Area Plans are included that provide opportunities to enhance community identity within the County. The following Area Plans in the new County General Plan provide land use guidance for the HCLE Corridor area: Reche Canyon/Badlands, Temescal Canyon, Lake Mathews/Woodcrest, March, Mead Valley, Lakeview/Nuevo, San Jacinto Valley, Sun City/Menifee Valley, Elsinore, and Harvest Valley/Winchester (Figure 3.1.1). The new County General Plan and applicable City General Plans support a concentration of medium and high density residential, commercial, business park, and light industrial land uses along the I-215 corridor in the center of the HCLE study area. Areas of planned retail commercial land uses are located at intervals along the east-west HCLE alternatives. The need for these retail activity areas would remain along each alternative, regardless if it is developed as a multimodal CETAP facility or remains a designated arterial. Much of the area between the HCLE alternatives is designated for rural, very low, and low density residential use, and for open space uses.

Alternatives 1a, 1b, H1, and H3 transect the planning areas for Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan, Mead Valley Area Plan, and Lake Mathews/Woodcrest Area Plan. The area plans include policies that reflect and are consistent with the CETAP Corridor studies. These alternatives, with the exception of H3, terminate in the City of Corona. Alternative H3's westerly terminus is in the City of Riverside. The planned land uses along these alternatives east of I-215 include open space, low and medium density residential uses, and business parks. A mixed-use community center is planned at the junction of I-215 and Ramona Expressway. The planned land uses for the area west of I-215 along Alternatives 1a, 1b, H1, and H3 are primarily open space and very low density residential land uses. Small commercial nodes are planned along Cajalco Road.

Alternatives 4a, 4c, 4d, and 5b transect the planning areas for the San Jacinto Valley Area Plan, the Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan, the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan, the Mead Valley Area Plan, and the Elsinore Area Plan. The area plans include policies that reflect and are consistent with the CETAP corridor studies. The planned land uses along these alternatives are characterized by a mix of open space and low and medium density residential, commercial, and light industrial uses. Commercial and light industrial uses are concentrated at the I-215 and Ethanac Road interchange. General commercial uses are also located where the various alternatives connect with I-15.

Alternatives H1, H3, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, and 5e, east of I-215 are in the planning areas for the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan and Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan. The planned land uses are generally light industrial near the junction with I-215 and low density residential with several commercial retail areas as well.

Alternatives 6a and 6b transect the planning areas for the Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan, the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan, and the Elsinore Area Plan. These area plans include policies that reflect and are consistent with the CETAP Corridor studies. The planned land uses are generally very low, low, and medium density residential land uses punctuated with retail commercial areas along Newport Road. A

Figure 3.1.1 - Area Plan Locations

large multi-use community center is located just south of this alternative along I-215 generally between Scott and Holland Roads.

3.1.2 City General Plans

The incorporated cities within the study area are Hemet, Lake Elsinore, Canyon Lake, San Jacinto, Riverside, Corona, Perris, and Moreno Valley (Figure 3.1.2). The General Plans for these cities generally call for improved mobility in the area, but do not include a specific reference to the CETAP process. The City General Plans also generally support regional transportation planning efforts. For example, the City of Canyon Lake General Plan calls for City participation in regional transportation planning and in the Riverside County Transportation Commission (Circulation Goal CEG-1, Policy CEP-1, and Strategy CES-1), and the City of Hemet General Plan supports working with the County to study the impacts of new development on roadways that cross jurisdictional boundaries (Transportation Policy 13).

3.1.3 Existing Land Use

Across the HCLE Corridor study area, agricultural land (includes all agricultural uses, as differentiated from the more selective "Farmland" categories discussed subsequently) predominates existing land use, as shown in Figure 3.1.3 and Table 3.1.A. For example, land used for agriculture measures from three to eight times more area than the next highest category of land use, and from almost 50 percent to almost 75 percent of total identified existing land use. This analysis describes changes to existing land uses, other than "vacant" land, that may occur from implementing each alternative. (*Note:* Much of the land identified as used for utilities is within the existing highway rights-of-way.)

3.1.3.1 Alternative 1a

Alternative 1a includes 549 ha (1,355 ac) of agricultural land in locations throughout the length of the route, with highest concentration between I-215 and San Jacinto. The alternative also includes 75 ha (186 ac) of residential property, primarily along Sobrante and Cajalco Roads west of I-215, and in north Perris. About 30 ha (75 ac) used for commercial and industrial purposes would be included in Corona, north Perris, and north San Jacinto. This alternative also includes 49 ha (121 ac) of two gravel pits/quarries between Corona and Lake Mathews and in north San Jacinto, and an 8 ha (20 ac) natural area west of I-15 in Corona.

3.1.3.2 Alternative 1b

The potentially affected area within the bandwidth of Alternative 1b is nearly the same as 1a, with minor differences because its southerly course avoids the largest gravel pit/quarry. Alternative 1b potentially includes 566 ha (1,397 ac) of agricultural land throughout the length of the route, with highest concentration between I-215 and San Jacinto. The alternative also includes 75 ha (186 ac) of residential property, primarily