

- C Lake Skinner Recreation Area, Warren Road, Winchester
- C French Valley Airport Project, French Valley

Future changes in land use will occur in accordance with the County's proposed new General Plan, as well as the General Plans of the cities of Hemet, San Jacinto, Perris, Riverside, Corona, Canyon Lake, and Lake Elsinore. In addition, the Pechanga Reservation in the southern portion of the study area is undergoing extensive commercial recreation development (hotels, casino, etc.). The new County General Plan, concurrently being developed as a component of the RCIP, will determine land uses in unincorporated Riverside County. Figure 4.16.1 illustrates the existing land uses within western Riverside County, and Figure 4.16.2 illustrates the planned land uses in both unincorporated County areas and incorporated city areas in western Riverside County.

The proposed CETAP alternatives would facilitate the conversion of some currently undeveloped lands to developed conditions in western Riverside County (refer to Chapter 7, Section 7.1, Growth Inducing Impacts). Access to more rural portions of the CETAP study area may hasten land conversion in more remote areas of the County where market pressures exist for development.

4.16.1 Land Use

The cumulative study area for land use impacts is western Riverside County. Past actions that have affected the land use character of western Riverside County in its transformation from rural to urban/suburban communities include the development of the freeway system including I-15, I-215, and SR-91/SR-60, that both served and encouraged land development in this historically relatively inexpensive area within the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Western Riverside County has seen continued growth in the past several decades, especially in the Temecula/Murrieta area, the Corona/Riverside area, Chino and Chino Hills, and Moreno Valley. The existing land use character in the study area is generalized on Figure 4.16.1.

The proposed County General Plan represents a current action that will guide and direct future development in Riverside County, including the more developed western portion of the County. The new General Plan focuses growth in and near designated community centers, increases the number of acres designated for open space, decreases the acreage designated for residential uses (a reduction of over 86,600 ha [214,000 ac] county wide), increases the amount of land designated for commercial, and decreases the amount of land planned for industrial use. The General Plan policies are intended to concentrate growth near or within existing urban and suburban areas, in order to maintain other areas as either open space or at a rural level of intensity. The planned land uses in the study area as proposed in the new County General Plan, as well as incorporated areas,¹ are depicted in Figure 4.16.2.

¹ Planned land use information for incorporated areas provided by Western Riverside Council of Governments, 1999.

Figure 4.16.1: Existing Land Uses

Figure 4.16.2: Planned Land Uses

Future actions that could affect the land use character of western Riverside County include the implementation of the land uses and policies prescribed in the proposed General Plan above, combined with the implementation of programmed improvements to the interstate highways, and the selection and implementation of CETAP alternatives in the two corridor study areas. The CETAP projects will ultimately be major transportation facilities that will provide transportation infrastructure to currently underserved portions of western Riverside County.

The selected HCLE Corridor alternative will contribute to the overall change in land use character not only by facilitating the proposed land uses as prescribed in the new County General Plan, but also by either supporting or, in some cases, refining the areas where growth will be concentrated as reflected in the proposed General Plan (see also Chapter 7.0). The presence of an HCLE CETAP facility in the future cumulative environment could also have direct and indirect impacts on adjacent or nearby land uses, including air quality, noise, and visual effects.

A comparison of Figures 4.16.1 and 4.16.2 indicate the proposed changes to areas that are currently vacant. A portion of the land currently vacant is in public ownership and committed to conservation or other non-development uses (Figure 4.16.1.) The remaining vacant lands are planned overall for rural and low-density residential uses, with focused growth planned at activity nodes or community centers and linear concentrations of development along major transportation corridors such as the I-215, and SR-74. The presence of a CETAP corridor could accelerate development in the vicinity of the corridor, but would not change the overall direction of the General Plan to maintain the low-density character of western Riverside County by focusing future growth and development intensities in specified areas.

4.16.1.1 Direct Effects

The direct effects of the selected HCLE alternative on the cumulative land use environment would result from the use of land for right-of-way. The CETAP corridors are included in the new General Plan Circulation Element, and the overall mix of land use types and intensities proposed in the General Plan would be the same under any of the alternatives. Table 4.1.A identifies the total number of acres within the bandwidth for each alternative, as well as the proposed land uses within the bandwidth. Since the ultimate facility for the HCLE Corridor has not yet been defined, the bandwidth represents the area that could potentially be affected, and is greater than the ultimate right-of-way that will be defined in the engineering design phase and analyzed in a Tier 2 level environmental document. Alternatives H1, H3, 1a, and 1b would result in the greatest use of land for a CETAP transportation project because they are the longest alternatives. While Alternatives H1 and H3 are partially located along the route of existing highway right-of-way (I-215), portions of these alternatives would also transect areas where there are no existing roadway alignments to follow. Alternatives 6a and 6b would utilize the least number of acres for future right-of-way, as they are the shortest of the seven build alternatives. A portion of Alternatives 6a and 6b would also include an area not along an existing roadway alignment.

Sensitive land uses that could be lost to the future right-of-way include open space, recreation, and designated farmlands. Cumulative impacts to farmlands are addressed in the following section. Project cumulative effects to recreation and natural areas vary by alternative and are discussed further in Sections 4.16.3 and 4.16.5.