

#### 4.16.2.2 Indirect Effects

In addition to the direct loss of land available for farming as a result of development, urban encroachment adversely affects the efficiency of remaining farming operations due to “increased air pollution, livestock predation by pets, crop diseases resulting from inadequate care of off-farm ornamental plants, restrictions on pesticide use and burning, and requirements to set aside on-farm buffer zones.” At the same time, production costs increase due to rising land values, water scarcity, theft and vandalism of farm equipment crop pilferage, road congestion, and personal injury liability resulting from trespassing on farms. By reducing the profitability of remaining farming operations, urban encroachment tends to take on a spiraling effect, encouraging further losses of farms to urban development (Source: General Plan EIR, Section 4.2).

In addition to the direct loss of agricultural land, build out of the proposed General Plan will permit the development of residential and employment generating uses adjacent to agricultural designated land. Indirect impacts associated with the agricultural uses include: the generation of dust, odors, and noise from agricultural operation; the proliferation of flies and other pest species; the potential for groundwater contamination (from large-scale feed lots and dairies), and aerial application of agricultural chemicals (Source: General Plan EIR, Section 4.2). Build out of the proposed General Plan will increase the likelihood of having residential and other community development uses in closer proximity to agricultural uses. However, the implementation of a CETAP alternative in the HCLE study area will not substantively alter the future land use pattern in western Riverside County as proposed in the General Plan, and therefore will not result in a substantive contribution to the indirect, cumulative impacts to agriculture. HCLE Alternatives 4a, 4c, 4d, 5b, 6a, and 6b will not include or be adjacent to agricultural uses under General Plan build out conditions; therefore, no indirect impacts to agriculture are expected as a result of these alternatives.

The draft policies within the proposed General Plan help to retain agricultural resources within the County. While the implementation of proposed General Plan policies would help reduce the conversion of agricultural lands to urban uses, the loss of 55,423 ha (136,872 ac) of agriculturally designated land would remain an unavoidable impact. The CETAP contribution to this loss (0 to 206 ha [0 to 509 ac] of agriculture within bandwidths under future, General Plan conditions) may be further reduced through the application of conservation easements as specified in the proposed mitigation measures. In sum, the project’s contribution to cumulative impacts to farmlands would not be substantive in light of the land use changes proposed in the General Plan.

#### 4.16.3 Recreation

The County of Riverside currently maintains 35 regional parks, encompassing approximately 9,033 ha (22,317 ac). More than half of these parks are located in the western portion of the County where the population is concentrated. In addition, Joshua Tree National Park, seven state-maintained open space and recreation areas, and 215 city parks are located within Riverside County. Private recreational facilities are found primarily in planned communities and apartment complexes. There are several commercial recreation facilities within the County, including golf

courses, polo and equestrian centers and water/amusement parks (General Plan EIR, Section 4.14).

There are existing and proposed policies and regulations that address the need for additional recreational facilities as the County population continues to grow. Riverside County has adopted provisions implementing the Quimby Act by requiring dedication of three acres of parkland per 1,000 population, or payment of a fee in lieu of such dedication. The requirement is enforced through the Subdivision Ordinance. The proposed General Plan includes policies that reduce or minimize the effects of future growth on parks and recreational facilities, including the requirement that new developments comply with the Quimby Act requirements and provide implementation strategies for the funding of both active and passive parks and recreation (General Plan EIR, Section 4.14). Specific roadway projects and other infrastructural projects to be implemented in support of the growth forecast by the County, as well as incorporated areas, will be required to mitigate any effects they would cause upon recreational facilities or plans in western Riverside County.

In addition to the general Open Space and Land Use policies in the new County General Plan, the following Area Plans provide land use guidance for the HCLE Corridor area: Elsinore, Sun City/Menifee Valley, Harvest Valley/Winchester, San Jacinto Valley, Lakeview/Nuevo, Reche Canyon Badlands, Mead Valley, Lake Mathews/Woodcrest, and Temescal Canyon. The Area Plan policies recognize the major recreation areas in the areas and implement strategies on preserving recreational resources within each area. The Area Plans do not identify these areas as currently park deficient.

There are several public parks or recreation areas within the bandwidths of the HCLE Build alternatives. The bandwidths for Alternatives 4a, 4c, H1, and H3 include one or two municipal parks each. The area of existing recreation and natural areas within the HCLE alternatives, as defined by the RCIP Existing Setting Report (1999), ranges from 0 ha/ac to 11 ha (28 ac). The Land Use Element of the new General Plan calls for new development to be focused in areas suitable for development, so that portions of western Riverside County can remain as open space or at rural densities. Therefore, the area of recreation and natural areas within the alternatives increases under General Plan build out conditions. The project's contribution to the net loss of recreation and natural areas is characterized by the difference between the existing and future conditions. Alternative 5b would result in the greatest contribution to the loss of recreation and natural areas under General Plan build out conditions (192 ha [474 ac]) of recreation and natural areas. Alternative 4a would cause the smallest change with a net loss of 22 ha (54 ac) within the bandwidth. Also, the HCLE Corridor study area enjoys convenient access to regional recreation resources such as Diamond Valley Lake, Lake Skinner, and Canyon Lake. The implementation of a CETAP alternative in the HCLE Corridor, in combination with other area developments and infrastructure projects, is not expected to contribute to a cumulative loss of recreational resources in the study area.

#### **4.16.4 Surface Water Hydrology, Floodplain Encroachment and Water Quality**

With respect to surface water hydrology, floodplains, and water quality, the proposed CETAP alternatives would facilitate the conversion of some lands that are currently