

3.1 Land Use

Each of the WT 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 Plan (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 WT Corridor is defined largely by the new Riverside County General Plan. Planned land use within portions of the WT Corridor is also reflected in the adopted General Plans of the Cities of Temecula and Murrieta. 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 Riverside County Integrated Project (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 project 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 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 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 C 7.2 states that the County will “Work with property owners to reserve right-of-