

3.15 Transportation and Circulation

3.15.1 Circulation Study Area and Transportation Modes

The following information is excerpted from the RCIP Existing Setting Report (LSA, 1999). Riverside County's transportation system is composed of numerous State highways, (both freeways and arterial highways), as well as numerous County and city routes. The public transit system includes fixed route public transit systems, common bus carriers, AMTRAK (intercity rail service), MetroLink (commuter rail service), and other local agency transit and paratransit (dial-a-ride) services. In addition, the County transportation system includes general aviation facilities, limited passenger air service within the County, extensive air passenger facilities in the Southern California and San Diego regions, freight rail service, bicycle facilities, and other nonmotorized forms of transportation (pedestrian and equestrian trails).

The private automobile is the dominant mode of travel within Riverside County. Trips by transit currently represent less than two percent (2 percent) of all trips made in the County. Public transportation, where service is available, is utilized primarily by a transit-dependent population that generally does not have access to automobiles.

The County is responsible for maintaining an extensive network of low volume rural roads in rural and urbanizing areas to service goods movement and the agricultural industry. Large trucks are the primary means of transporting such goods. In addition, freight rail is an important backbone of the goods movement industry in Riverside County. Nonmotorized forms of transportation are also prevalent in Riverside County including numerous bikeways, pedestrian facilities, and equestrian amenities.

This study area of the proposed WT corridor is defined as the area connecting the unincorporated area of Winchester with the cities of Murrieta and Temecula (See Figure 3.15.1). It also encompasses the unincorporated areas of Menifee, Murrieta Hot Springs, Rancho California, and others.

3.15.2 Existing Regional Circulation System

Figure 3.15.1 illustrates the circulation study area of the WT Corridor.

The principal highway facility in this corridor study area is SR-79, providing north-south mobility throughout the length of the corridor study area. At the southern end of the corridor in Temecula, SR 79 (Winchester Road) is a six-lane facility (plus turning lanes) and one of the City's major thoroughfares. SR 79 then passes just west of Diamond Valley Lake (formerly Eastside Reservoir) and is expected to be the major access route to the recreational activities at the reservoir. SR-79 continues southeastward from southern end of Temecula. This section is currently six lanes from east of the City to I-15. Butterfield Stage Road is planned to directly connect SR-79 north of Temecula with SR-79 south of Temecula. Portions of Butterfield Stage Road have been constructed.