

3.2 Farmland

3.2.1 Types of Farmland

The study area includes thousands of hectares (acres) of farmland used for orchards, vineyards, and grain crops; raising livestock and poultry; grazing; and dairy operations. Agricultural land throughout western Riverside County is under increasing pressure of conversion to urban use. This analysis focuses on potential impacts to three important types of farmland, hereinafter referred to as “designated” farmland, as shown in Figure 3.2.1. The summarized definitions below are from the California Department of Conservation, and are different from general agricultural land discussed in Sections 3.1 and 4.1.

- C *Prime Farmland* has the best combination of characteristics for producing crops. It produces sustained high yields when properly managed, and is not in or committed to urban development.
- C *Unique Farmland* is other than Prime Farmland but capable of producing high-value crops.
- C *Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance* does not qualify as Prime or Unique Farmlands, but is irrigated land determined to be important by State and local governments.

3.2.2 Alternatives

3.2.2.1 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 includes almost 17 ha (42 ac) of Prime Farmland and up to 330 ha (815 ac) of Farmlands of State or Local Importance. Designated farmland is present throughout the alternative, with Prime Farmland along SR-79 west of Diamond Valley Lake. Parcels of land along the alternative vary in size and suggest a mixture of full-time and part-time farming operations.

3.2.2.2 Alternative 3

The designated farmland characteristics of Alternative 3 are nearly the same as Alternative 1. This alternative includes 17 ha (42 ac) of Prime Farmland along SR-79 west of Diamond Valley Lake and approximately 330 ha (815 ac) of Farmlands of State or Local Importance. Parcels of land along the alternative vary in size and suggest a mixture of full-time and part-time farming operations.

3.2.2.3 Alternative 5a

Alternative 5a includes 17 ha (42 ac) of Prime Farmland, 17 ha (42 ac) of Unique Farmland, and 361 ha (891 ac) of Farmlands of State or Local Importance. The Prime Farmland is along the north half of the route shared by Alternatives 1 and 3, and in the vineyards east of Temecula.