

Unemployment in the County measured 5.5 percent in 1999, slightly above the State's 5.3 percent, as it has been in recent years. The County's trend in unemployment rate is favorable, decreasing each year since hitting 9.5 percent in 1995.

### 3.3.2.2 Agriculture

Riverside County contained 3,048 farms on 206,100 ha (509,000 ac) in 1997, according to the Agricultural Census ([www.nass.usda.gov/census/census97/highlights/ca/cac033.txt](http://www.nass.usda.gov/census/census97/highlights/ca/cac033.txt)). Agricultural revenues valued at \$1.05 billion were generated in the County that year, 55 percent from crops and orchard products and the remainder from livestock sales. Important crops include orchards (49 percent of farms, 25 percent of agricultural revenues) and vegetables (5 percent of farms, 14 percent of revenues), while dairy (11 percent of farms, 26 percent of revenues) and poultry (4 percent of farms, 12 percent of revenues) were the dominant livestock industries.

Most of the cropland in Riverside County is irrigated (79 percent), and most farming operations are smaller than 20 ha (50 ac) in size (79 percent). Farms in the County are generally profitable, with average revenues of \$344,000 and average operating expenses of \$255,000. Farming was the principal occupation of 44 percent of the 3,048 farm owners in Riverside County.

Agricultural businesses of all kinds operate throughout the study area. A number of vineyards and orchards are located east and south of Temecula, although the orchards are increasingly fragmented by residential development. Livestock operations and farms line much of the land along SR-79 near Winchester and between SR-79 and I-215 north of Murrieta.

### 3.3.3 WT Study Area

The study area comprises seven tracts from the 1990 Census and 22 tracts from the 2000 Census. The higher number of tracts in 2000 reflects the Census Bureau decreasing the size of tracts in response to growing population density. Figure 3.3.1 shows the census tracts in the study area.

#### 3.3.3.1 Potentially Affected Communities

The WT study area comprises several communities, as previously shown in Figure 3.1.2 and as listed in Table 3.3.C. These communities may be directly affected by the alternatives by expansion or modification of streets, right-of-way acquisition, or displacement of homes and businesses. Residents may experience reduced local or regional travel time by improved access to higher capacity roadways and transit facilities. Residents of the study area also stand to benefit from improved mobility across western Riverside County.