

## 4.1 Land Use

### 4.1.1 Methodology for Impact Evaluation

The land use impact evaluation of the WT alternatives began with a review of aerial photographs (June 2000) and maps of the project study area. Vehicle and pedestrian surveys of alternative routes in the study area were conducted. Several site surveys were conducted to gain broad perspective of the communities, to evaluate specific neighborhoods or smaller areas, and to ascertain information gathered from secondary sources.

Information was gathered from local community planning departments, the Riverside County Planning and Finance Departments, and the California Department of Conservation, including the most current information being used in the concurrent General Plan being developed as part of the RCIP. The information gathered from maps and aerial photographs, site visits, censuses, and agencies was evaluated using spreadsheets, figures, and GIS analysis to describe the potential impacts of each alternative. The affected area for each alternative is the approximately 150 to 300 m (500 to 1,000 ft) right-of-way preservation area previously described in the Chapter 2, Alternatives. All resources within the preservation area are considered to be potentially affected. Precise determination of impacts will be made at the Tier 2 level of analysis for the selected alternative based on the availability of more detailed project engineering.

### 4.1.2 Impacts

The WT Corridor alternatives will affect existing and future land uses in the WT study area. Planned land uses frequently vary from existing patterns, reflecting trends regarding growing municipalities, modified patterns of rural development, and continued conversion of agricultural lands. This analysis evaluates planned land uses reported by municipalities and Riverside County that would be converted to right-of-way for the transportation route proposed under CETAP. The analysis is based on a GIS database of existing land uses, City General Plans, and the new Riverside County General Plan.

#### 4.1.2.1 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 bi-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 is to accommodate projected population growth by focusing development within areas that will be readily accessible, that will provide a good quality of life for future residents, and that will minimize environmental and community impacts.

The new Riverside County General Plan was released for public review in April, 2002. The intent of the General Plan is to effectively manage the overall pattern of development in Riverside County. Detailed Area Plans are included that provide opportunities

to enhance community identity within the county. The WT study area is guided by three Area Plans, the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan, the Southwest Area Plan, and the Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan. A summary of key applicable area plan policies is provided in Section 3.1.

The WT Corridor alternatives under consideration are consistent with the new Riverside County General Plan and the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan. Alternatives 7a, 7b, and a portion of Alternative 1, Alternative 3, and Alternative H are within the Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan (Figure 3.1.1). Alternatives 1, 3, 7a, and 7b support the Community Center designation centered around Scott Road and I-215 by introducing a transit corridor to the proposed mixed-use activity center. If Alternatives 5a or 5b were to be implemented, an expansion of the Village Center proposed in the City of Temecula General Plan might be warranted.

The southern part of the WT study area is located in the north central portion of the Southwest Area Plan, as described in Section 3.1. Alternatives 5a and 5b, as well as portions of Alternative H, are located within the Southwest Area Plan. Future growth in the Southwest Area is expected to be largely accommodated in the area northeast of the existing Cities of Temecula and Murrieta in the WT study area. The Area Plan calls for a Community Center to be located at the junction of Murrieta Hot Springs Road and State Route 79. This designation is intended to function like a traditional downtown, with a mixture of retail, service, office, visitor serving uses and multifamily residences, parks, and civic uses. CETAP alternatives 1, 3, 7a, and 7b would serve the Community Center, particularly with a transit component that could serve more intense development, and would further the intent of the Southwest Area Plan.

The WT Corridor alternatives are located within the policy area for the French Valley Airport. The policy area is subject to restrictions on land use, population concentrations, and development heights in order to maintain compatibility between new development and the airport. It is not anticipated that the proposed multimodal facility would create a conflict with the airport, although Tier 2 level design will reflect airport land use restrictions if needed.

The Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan provides land use direction for the area around the eastern terminus of Alternatives 7a and 7b, and the northern terminus of Alternatives 1, 3, 5a, and 5b. The Area Plan policies and land use designations reflect a shift from the existing rural character of the area to a mix of urban, suburban, and rural land uses focused around core, community, and village centers.

The Community Center designation in the Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan in the Harvest Valley/Winchester Area Plan at the eastern terminus of Alternatives 7a and 7b is consistent with the provision of a multimodal transportation facility to this area that includes a transit component. WT Alternatives 7a and 7b would serve and further the intent of the Area Plan policies calling for a community center at this location. Similarly, the proposed community center on SR-79 opposite Diamond Valley Lake would be served by Alternatives 1, 3, 5a, and 5b that terminate near this center.

The small community center north of alternatives 7a and 7b along Salt Creek is not directly served by any of the WT alternatives, although it is located near Alternatives 5 (5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e) and 6 (6a, 6b) of the HCLE Corridor. The planned Salt Creek Community Center is not in conflict with the WT alternatives, and is consistent with the 5 and 6 alternatives in the HCLE Corridor.

The WT study area is located in the area subject to nighttime lighting requirements for the Mount Palomar Observatory. The proposed Riverside County General Plan supports the application of county requirements that are intended to limit light leakage and spillage that may interfere with the operations of the Palomar Observatory. The observatory is located outside of the study area within the Cleveland National Forest in North San Diego County.

In conclusion, the WT Corridor alternatives under consideration are consistent with the new Riverside County General Plan. Alternative H supports the Community Center designation centered around Murrieta Hot Springs Road and SR 79 by introducing a transit corridor to the proposed mixed-use activity center. If Alternatives 5a or 5b were to be implemented, an expansion of the Village Center proposed in the City of Temecula General Plan might be warranted. The selection and implementation of a CETAP alternative in the WT Corridor would not conflict with specific Area Plan policies pertaining to light pollution effects on Palomar Observatory and land use compatibility with French Valley Airport. Once a CETAP alternative for the WT Corridor is selected, amendments to the new County and current City General Plans will be necessary to reflect the selected multimodal transportation route.

#### 4.1.2.2 City General Plans

The incorporated cities within the study area are Temecula and Murrieta. The General Plans for both cities call for improved mobility. Neither General Plan includes a specific reference to the CETAP process.

The City of Temecula Circulation Element (1993) calls for “A regional transportation system that accommodates the safe and efficient movement of people and goods to and from the community” (Goal 3). The Circulation Element also supports the provision of a new freeway interchange north of Winchester Road, and fixed route transit service along major transportation corridors connecting to regional employment and commercial areas. Policy 3.6 of the Circulation Element seeks to pursue “opportunities for a light rail transit along major transportation corridors which connect Temecula to other population centers.” The goal of the City of Murrieta Circulation Element (1994) is to provide “A circulation system that serves the internal circulation needs of the City, while also addressing the inter-community or through travel needs.” The implementation of a WT alternative is consistent with the policies of these two General Plans.

#### 4.1.2.3 Existing and Future Land Use

Based upon the projected development in the County and City General Plans, the proposed changes in land use across the entire WT Corridor study area (45,600 ha or 112,700 ac) are dramatic in some cases. For example, in the General Plan Build Out analysis period:

- C Agricultural land (includes all agricultural uses, as differentiated from the more selective "Farmland" categories discussed subsequently) is expected to drop from almost 10,400 ha (25,600 ac) to 2,100 ha (5,200 ac) – an 80 percent reduction,
- C Residential uses (all types combined) are proposed to rise from 6,500 ha (16,100 ac) to 20,000 ha (49,400 ac) – a 207 percent increase,