

community centers identified in the proposed Plan would be reduced. Rather than reducing the overall build out of unincorporated areas, this alternative would represent a less concentrated pattern of development intensity as compared to the proposed Plan. Adoption and implementation of the proposed western Riverside County MSHCP would be assumed. Development intensity that is shown on General Plan and Area Plan land use maps within the MSHCP preserve areas would be distributed evenly throughout western Riverside County. As a consequence, the location of development would be changed, but there would not be an overall increase in residential build out within western Riverside County. Two north-south and two east-west corridors of the CETAP would be included in the proposed circulation system for this alternative. There would be an enhanced arterial system that would maximize roadway capacity. Roadways that are inconsistent with implementation of the MSHCP (e.g., Davis Road) would not be included in the proposed circulation system. Cities would build out according to their General Plans with this alternative. No annexations of cities' spheres of influence would be assumed. As a result, spheres of influence would be built out based on the Reduced Community Centers Alternative.

The scale and intensity of the community centers identified in the Plan would be increased with the **MORE INTENSE COMMUNITY CENTERS ALTERNATIVE**; however, the number of community centers would be reduced. Rather than increasing the overall build out of unincorporated areas, this alternative would represent a more concentrated pattern of development intensity as compared to the proposed Plan. Adoption and implementation of the proposed western Riverside County MSHCP would be assumed. Development intensity that is shown on General Plan and Area Plan land use maps within MSHCP preserve areas would be redistributed into community centers within western Riverside County. The redistribution of development from conservation areas would change the location of, but not result in an overall increase in, residential build out within western Riverside County. Two north-south and two east-west corridors would be included in the proposed circulation system. An "enhanced" arterial system, which maximizes roadway capacity, is assumed. Roadways that are inconsistent with implementation of the MSHCP (e.g., Davis Road) would not be included in the proposed circulation system. This alternative assumes that cities would be built out according to their General Plans. No annexations of cities' spheres of influence are assumed. As a result, spheres of influence would be built out based on the More Intense Community Centers Alternative.

With the **DENSITY BONUS ALTERNATIVE**, an incentive system would provide density bonuses to proposed development meeting specified criteria. Thus, this alternative would contain a net increase in residential development within unincorporated areas. The density bonus system would be applied to the proposed project to determine the potential environmental effects of increasing overall development intensity. In addition, the density bonus system also would be applied to the More Intense Community Centers Alternative, if that alternative were to show promise for reducing traffic congestion by increasing the use of transit. It would be applied if the redistribution of development intensity from conservation areas to community centers in the More Intense Community Centers Alternative were to fall short of the objective of having 15 percent of the new development within unincorporated Riverside County occurring within community centers. When applied to the proposed project or the More Intense Community Centers Alternative, the Density Bonus Alternative would employ the same assumptions for each regarding the MSHCP, CETAP corridors, proposed circulation system, and development within cities and their spheres of influence.

5. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

An Initial Study has been prepared to identify potential environmental impacts that may occur upon implementation of the proposed General Plan. The Initial Study was prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, and State CEQA Guidelines. This document also complies with the procedures of the County of Riverside for implementing CEQA. One

of the primary purposes of an Initial Study is to determine whether a proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment, and whether preparation of an EIR is required.

The County of Riverside has determined that implementation of the proposed Riverside County General Plan may have a significant effect on the environment and that an EIR will be prepared. Issues to be addressed in the EIR include:

Aesthetics. The potential for significant impacts to vistas and scenic resources as a result of implementing the proposed General Plan, as well as the effectiveness of its scenic protection policies, will be evaluated in the General Plan EIR. While significant impacts related to light and glare are anticipated to be limited, the General Plan EIR will address this issue and the effectiveness of the policies of the proposed General Plan. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Agricultural Resources. The proposed General Plan will result in the conversion of prime farmlands, unique farmlands, or farmlands of statewide importance to a variety of non-agricultural uses. The extent of planned conversion of agricultural uses will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. The new General Plan proposes policies for the provision of buffer areas along these edges to protect land designated for long-term agricultural use. The effectiveness of these policies to prevent additional conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses will be evaluated in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Air Quality. Development pursuant to the proposed General Plan will result in an increased number of vehicle trips, leading to increased emissions of air pollutants. The potential of these increases to conflict with or obstruct implementation of applicable air quality standards within unincorporated Riverside County will be analyzed. The potential of these increases to contribute substantially to existing or projected violations of applicable air quality standards also will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. In addition, the potential effects of these increased air pollutant emissions on existing and future development within unincorporated Riverside County will be analyzed. While no significant impacts related to odors are anticipated, the General Plan EIR will identify any existing problems and analyze proposed changes in land use that could increase the exposure of people to objectionable odors. Mitigation measures, where necessary, will be identified to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Biological Resources. Concurrent with the proposed General Plan, Riverside County has undertaken an MSHCP to ensure that sensitive species are provided adequate protection. The Coachella Valley Association of Governments has also undertaken a Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan for the Coachella Valley area. However, not all sensitive species will be protected by these habitat conservation plans. The effects of the proposed Riverside County General Plan build out on biological resources, riparian habitat area, and wetlands will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The proposed General Plan EIR will identify existing wildlife dispersal and/or migration areas, and address the potential impacts of General Plan build out, as well as the effectiveness of proposed preservation policies and plans in relation to these areas. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Cultural Resources. Impacts upon historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources could result from General Plan implementation in the form of individual private development and public works projects, even though Riverside County maintains policies to protect and minimize any adverse impacts on these resources. Potential impacts, as well as the effectiveness of proposed General Plan policies will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen

or avoid any significant impacts.

Geology and Soils. The potential effects of fault rupture and ground shaking on existing and future development within Riverside County will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR, along with the effectiveness of proposed General Plan policies aimed at reducing risks from seismic hazards. The potential effects of ground failure on existing and future development within the unincorporated areas will be analyzed, along with the effectiveness of proposed General Plan policies aimed at reducing risks from secondary seismic hazards. The potential effects of erosion or loss of topsoil, slope failure, or expansive soils related to existing and future development within unincorporated areas will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR, along with the effectiveness of proposed General Plan policies aimed at reducing associated risks. The potential effects of soils that cannot adequately support the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems within unincorporated areas that do not have access to municipal sewer service will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The effectiveness of proposed General Plan policies aimed at ensuring adequate sewage disposal will also be analyzed. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. While it is not anticipated that the implementation of the proposed General Plan will result in significant environmental impacts relative to the accidental release of hazardous materials and/or hazardous wastes, to ensure that significant impacts do not result, these issues will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. The risks associated with the transportation of hazardous materials throughout the County will also be analyzed. The potential for significant impacts on school facilities resulting from the emission of hazardous emissions or the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of schools also will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. The proposed General Plan provides for the use and reuse of hazardous materials sites identified pursuant to Government Code Section 675962.5. A potentially significant hazard for people residing or working in the area could result. These issues will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Although the General Plan includes provisions to minimize safety hazards for people living or working in proximity to the County's public airports or private airstrips, the potential for safety hazards still exists. The General Plan EIR will address this issue. To ensure that significant impacts do not result, an assessment of the adequacy of emergency response and evacuation plans and potential impacts on these plans will be included in the General Plan EIR. New development within or near high fire hazard areas may expose additional persons to hazardous conditions. Additionally, there is the potential for an increase in the occurrence of fire in these areas due to increasing population and the fact that a majority of wildland fires are caused by human carelessness. The General Plan EIR will address exposure to hazards affecting existing and future development within the study area. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Hydrology and Water Quality. Future development within the unincorporated portions of Riverside County has the potential to cause changes in amount and quality of surface water runoff, which could affect the quality of lakes and groundwater. New development also has the potential to increase the use of groundwater and cause changes in absorption rates. It is thus possible that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level. In addition, there is the potential to alter existing drainage patterns. Such modified patterns could result in substantial erosion or soil deposition. These issues will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Increases in runoff resulting from the introduction of impervious surfaces by new development may exceed the capacity of existing and future storm drain and flood control facilities. The proposed General Plan contains policies to avoid such impacts. The effectiveness of such policies to eliminate significant impacts will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Due to urban runoff from developed properties, impacts to groundwater quality could occur as a result of General Plan build out. This urban runoff contains contaminants (heavy metals,

pesticides, etc.) that may or may not percolate into the groundwater. This issue will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Failure of the County's dams and levees could cause widespread flooding. Potential flooding impacts will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. The potential effects of seismic seiching, dam failures, and failure of levees on existing and future development within unincorporated areas also will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Land Use and Planning. Land use designations and development intensities within unincorporated Riverside County may be changed with adoption of the proposed General Plan. One objective of the proposed General Plan is to eliminate conflicts among adopted land use designations and the plans, policies, and regulations of agencies having direct or indirect jurisdiction over land use within unincorporated lands (e.g., State and Federal agencies, public service agencies). There is no assurance that, even if an accord were reached among these agencies and the County, that outside agencies would, in fact, adopt the recommendations of the General Plan. The environmental effects of the land use changes will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary and feasible, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Mineral Resources. The policies of the proposed General Plan are not anticipated to cause significant impacts to known mineral resources; however, to ensure that significant impacts do not result, this issue will be assessed in the General Plan EIR. The EIR for the proposed General Plan will address whether the availability of minerals within any lands now designated for mineral resource extraction will be lost as the result of the proposed General Plan. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Noise. Development that occurs pursuant to the updated Riverside County General Plan will result in increased traffic, leading to increased noise levels along affected roadways. Development (primarily industrial and mining) that occurs pursuant to the updated Riverside County General Plan could create groundborne vibrations. Development that occurs pursuant to the proposed Riverside County General Plan will result in temporary construction activities, leading to temporary increases in noise levels. The potential exists for future development occurring pursuant to the adopted General Plan to expose people to noise generated at public and private airports. The potential effects of increased noise and the relationship of future noise levels and relevant noise standards will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Population and Housing. A General Plan is, by definition, growth-inducing, in that it provides a plan for accommodating future increases in population, housing, and employment. It also provides a plan for ensuring that adequate infrastructure is available to serve that growth. The effects of population and housing growth that will be induced by the proposed General Plan will be addressed in the EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Public Services. Riverside County's existing police and fire protection systems and their capacity to support future growth will be reviewed to determine if the services and facilities will be sufficient to support additional demand. Potential impacts on police and fire protection services will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. The ability of existing school facilities serving unincorporated Riverside County to support future growth will be analyzed, and potential impacts on school facilities will be evaluated in the General Plan EIR. The ability of governmental facilities serving unincorporated Riverside County to support future growth will be analyzed as well. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Recreation. The ability of existing park and recreation facilities serving unincorporated Riverside County to support future growth will be analyzed. Potential impacts will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Implementation of the proposed General Plan will increase demand for park and recreation facilities and will require the construction of new parks. Depending upon the location and function of these new parks, it is possible that park construction related to development occurring pursuant to the proposed General Plan could result in adverse physical effects on the environment. These potential effects will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Transportation/Traffic. The land use changes proposed as part of the new Riverside County General Plan will result in an increased number of vehicle trips that may lead to potential traffic congestion beyond that addressed in existing adopted plans and policies. The effects of traffic and the Circulation Element of the proposed General Plan on existing and future development within the study area will be analyzed in the General Plan EIR. Future levels of service resulting from the traffic that will be generated by implementation of the proposed County General Plan land uses will be addressed. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Utilities and Service Systems. The General Plan EIR will address existing sewage treatment services, projected future capacities, and their ability to accommodate increased demand associated with build out of the proposed General Plan. Impacts on sewage collection and treatment facilities will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Implementation of the proposed General Plan will increase demand for water facilities, and will require the construction of new facilities. Depending upon the location of these new facilities, it is possible that their construction could result in adverse physical effects on the environment. These potential physical effects will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Because the proposed General Plan is likely to modify at least some of the land use and growth assumptions that formed the basis of the Solid Waste Management Plan, it is possible that future development consistent with the General Plan could exceed the capacity of area landfills. Impacts on solid waste disposal facilities will be addressed in the General Plan EIR. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed General Plan will define the extent of future development within the unincorporated portions of Riverside County. If development within these unincorporated areas, as well as within the cities in Riverside County, were to progress at or near the maximum extent allowed under these agencies' General Plans, considerable cumulative impacts may occur and extend beyond the boundaries of County. In addition, it is possible that the impacts of implementing the Riverside County General Plan will combine with impacts associated with development occurring in surrounding counties to create significant cumulative impacts. An assessment of the cumulative impacts of the proposed Riverside County General Plan and adjacent jurisdictions will be conducted. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to lessen or avoid any significant impacts.