

**NEPA/SECTION 404 INTEGRATION PROCESS  
CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES  
IN CETAP CORRIDORS  
For The  
RIVERSIDE COUNTY INTEGRATED PROJECT**

This paper presents a set of proposed criteria for evaluating transportation alternatives within the corridors being studied in the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) in Riverside County. CETAP is one component of the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP). While a separate set of performance criteria (based in part upon SCAG’s performance criteria for regional transportation project evaluation) has been used by Riverside County stakeholders to establish local transportation priorities, the criteria presented below is intended to be used specifically for the evaluation of alternatives within the NEPA/404 integration process for the CETAP corridors. Evaluation of new alternatives will be considered only after a determination that avoidance alternatives are not feasible or practicable.

Two sets of criteria are proposed. The first set is intended to identify practicable alternatives, and is excerpted directly from the guidance papers for the NEPA/404 integration process. The second set of criteria will be used to determine the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) for each CETAP corridor. Only those alternatives that can be shown to meet the project purpose and need will be carried into the EIR/EIS for evaluation of the factors discussed below.

**CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVES**

Criteria to be applied in the identification of practicable alternatives are described in Section IV.D.2 of the NEPA/404 Guidance Paper (February, 1994) and are restated here since they will be applied in the evaluation of CETAP alternatives. An alternative is not considered practicable if:

- A. It does not meet the project purpose and need,
- B. Cost of construction (including mitigation) is excessive,
- C. There are severe operational or safety problems,
- D. There are unacceptable adverse social, economic, or environmental impacts,
- E. There would be serious community disruption,
- F. There are unsuitable demographics (for transit alternatives), and
- G. There are logistical or technical constraints.

The reasons for eliminating any alternatives will be documented in detail in the EIR/EIS.

**CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFYING THE LEAST ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING PRACTICABLE ALTERNATIVE (LEDPA)**

**Primary Criteria**

1. **Aquatic Resources** are jurisdictional wetlands and non-wetland waters of the U.S. affected before mitigation by the alternative (total acreage). Each of these resources is protected under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Specific factors to be considered in the analysis are the amount of acreage lost, the functions and values affected, indirect impacts (e.g., growth inducement), and cumulative impacts. Avoidance of impacts to aquatic resources is the first priority. Minimization of impacts in areas where avoidance

is not feasible is the second priority. Factors that make avoidance or minimization alternatives not practicable such as cost, performance, socioeconomic impacts, or other factors will be addressed in the analysis.

### Secondary Criteria

1. **Section 4(f) Resources** are public parklands and recreational resources, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic properties listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places that are protected under the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966. As with aquatic resources, consideration of avoidance alternatives (or minimization alternatives where avoidance is not feasible) is required. The analysis will consider the acreage of Section 4(f) resources affected after mitigation.
2. **Sensitive Species Habitat** focuses on habitats within western Riverside County that may be home to one or more sensitive species. Such habitat may occur both within and outside of preserve areas proposed for the western Riverside County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). While the CETAP corridors would be permitted uses under the MSHCP, avoidance of or minimization of impacts to sensitive species habitat is still a desirable goal.
3. **Consistency with RCIP Vision Statement, including the MSHCP and Revised General Plan** will be an important consideration with respect to the integration of the CETAP corridors within the overall RCIP framework.

### Additional Criteria

1. **Cultural Resources** refers to the number of prehistoric or historic archaeological resources affected by the alternative. These types of resources are protected by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
2. **Air Quality** is an important factor as an alternative must demonstrate consistency with the federal Clean Air Act in order to be considered practicable.
3. **Environmental Justice** will be considered to determine whether alternatives have a disproportionate impact on low income or minority populations.
4. **Displacement of Residents and Businesses** will be considered to determine how many would be affected by each alternative and whether adequate relocation opportunities exist.
5. **Noise Impacts** will be considered to determine the extent of noise impacts to existing sensitive receptors and the feasibility of mitigation.
6. **Visual Impacts** will be considered to determine the extent of visual impacts to both stationary and mobile viewers.
7. **Land Use Compatibility** will be assessed in consideration of displacements, noise impacts, visual impacts, and any impacts on community cohesion.