Caltrans

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

RCTC RIVERSIDE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Land Use and Planning Technical Memorandum

Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Program

May 2021

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Abbreviations/Acronyms

Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
corridor	Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor
EIR	environmental impact report
EIS	environmental impact statement
FRA	Federal Railroad Administration
GIS	geographic information system
LAUS	Los Angeles Union Station
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
Program	Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Program
Policy C	Policy Circulation
Policy CI	Policy Circulation and Infrastructure
Policy LU	Policy Land Use
RCTC	Riverside County Transportation Commission
ROW	right-of-way
RTP	regional transportation plan
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCS	sustainable communities strategy
SDP	Service Development Plan

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1 Introduction

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Rail and Mass Transportation, and Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) are proposing the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Program (Program) to establish daily intercity passenger rail service between Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) in Los Angeles County, California and the City of Coachella in Riverside County, California. This land use and planning technical memorandum evaluates the land use distribution along the 144-mile Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor (Program Corridor) in support of a programmatic Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The evaluation of potential land use effects resulting from the Program includes:

- Physical division of established communities (where existing land uses would be converted to transportation-related land uses at representative station area locations)
- Consistency with applicable planning documents (land use and circulation goals and policies)

1.1 Study Approach

This evaluation was prepared pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will be incorporated into the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation.

FRA, Caltrans, and RCTC are using a tiered NEPA/CEQA process (e.g., Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) to complete the environmental review of the Program, under 40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.28 (titled “Tiering”), CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 (titled “Program EIR”), and Section 15170 (titled “Joint EIS/EIR”). “Tiering” is a staged environmental review process often applied to environmental review for complex transportation projects.

The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR, along with the concurrent preparation of the Service Development Plan (SDP), are the first steps in the tiered environmental review process. Based on the decisions made in the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR and SDP, future site-specific proposals of infrastructure improvements will be evaluated through one or more Tier 2/Project-level environmental clearance processes. A description of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR, SDP, and Tier 2/Project-level analysis processes are further discussed below:

- *Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR*: The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluates potential environmental impacts of the No Build Alternative and three Build Alternative Options broadly within the Program Corridor. The Program Corridor provides a flexible regional context for the best location of an enhanced passenger rail system while providing opportunities for the Build Alternative Options to account for engineering and environmental constraints. The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation addresses broad questions and likely environmental effects within the Tier 1/Program Study Area for specific environmental resources. The resource-specific study areas generally represent the potential area where rail infrastructure improvements and station facilities could be implemented and constructed but does not represent the precise location or footprint of the improvement or facility.
- *SDP*: The SDP defines the Program's service mode, estimated ridership to include demand and revenue forecasts, operational strategy, station and access analysis, operating and maintenance costs, required infrastructure improvements and capital programming, and public benefits analysis necessary to implement the proposed intercity passenger rail service. As part of the SDP process, the site-specific infrastructure improvement requirements are being identified, including the number of stations and the general areas/communities in which stations might be located. The SDP infrastructure analysis is being informed by rail operations simulation modeling and would occur parallel to the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation process.
- *Tier 2 Project-Level Analysis*: Based on the environmental evaluation conducted in the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR and the site-specific infrastructure improvements identified in the SDP, a Tier 2/Project-level analysis would be required. The Tier 2/Project-level analysis would be a separate environmental review potentially led and funded by an agency other than FRA. In addition, the Tier 2/Project-level analysis process would not automatically follow the Tier 1 process, rather the potential Tier 2 Projects would need to be defined based on the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR's broad scope and funding. The Tier 2/Project-level analysis would closely align with the future preliminary engineering process and would analyze site-specific direct and indirect Project-level effects, in addition to any required permits, consultations, or approvals needed for construction.

2 Program Location and Description

2.1 Program Location

The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR analyzes the No Build Alternative and three Build Alternative Options in two geographic sections—a Western Section and an Eastern Section—occurring within existing railroad rights-of-way (ROW), as shown on Figure 2-1 through Figure 2-3. The Program Corridor runs west-to-east, extending up to 144 linear miles from a western terminus at LAUS to an eastern terminus in either the City of Indio or City of Coachella (depending on the Build Alternative Option).

From west to east, the cities traversed by the Build Alternative Options include Los Angeles, Vernon, Bell, Commerce, Montebello, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, Norwalk, La Mirada, Buena Park, Fullerton, Anaheim, Placentia, Yorba Linda, Chino Hills, Corona, Riverside, Grand Terrace, Colton, San Bernardino, Loma Linda, Redlands, Calimesa, Beaumont, Banning, Cabazon, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Thousand Palms, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Indio (under all Build Alternative Options), and/or Coachella (under Build Alternative Option 1 only). The boundary between Western and Eastern Sections is in the City of Colton, at the intersection of existing railroad lines owned by Union Pacific Railroad and BNSF.

2.2 Program Description

2.2.1 Build Alternative Option 1 (Coachella Terminus)

Build Alternative Option 1 includes a total Program Corridor distance of 144 miles and consists of a Western Section, terminating at LAUS, and an Eastern Section, terminating in the City of Coachella.

Western Section. Under Build Alternative Option 1, existing rail infrastructure would be used in the Western Section of the Program Corridor, and no additional railroad infrastructure improvements would be required. LAUS would serve as the western terminus, while existing stations in the Cities of Fullerton and Riverside would be utilized to support the proposed passenger rail service. No new stations or improvements to existing stations would be required to accommodate the proposed service within the Western Section of the Program Corridor.

Eastern Section. Under Build Alternative Option 1, potential new infrastructure improvements on the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor could include sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade separation structures, and up to five new stations constructed in the following areas: 1) Loma Linda/Redlands Area (serving the Cities of Loma Linda and Redlands),

2) the Pass Area (serving the communities of Beaumont, Banning, and Cabazon), 3) the Mid Valley (serving the communities of Cathedral City, Thousand Palms, the Agua Caliente Casino area, Rancho Mirage, and Palm Desert), 4) the City of Indio, and 5) the City of Coachella as the eastern terminus of the Program Corridor.

2.2.2 Build Alternative Option 2 (Indio Terminus)

Build Alternative Option 2 includes a total Program Corridor distance of 140.25 miles and consists of a Western Section, terminating at LAUS, and an Eastern Section, terminating at the City of Indio.

Western Section. The Western Section under Build Alternative Option 2 would be the same as that described above under Build Alternative Option 1.

Eastern Section. Under Build Alternative Option 2, potential new infrastructure improvements on the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor could include sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade separation structures, and up to four new potential stations could be constructed in the following areas: 1) Loma Linda/Redlands Area (serving the Cities of Loma Linda and Redlands), 2) the Pass Area (serving the communities of Beaumont, Banning, and Cabazon), 3) the Mid Valley (serving the communities of Cathedral City, Thousand Palms, the Agua Caliente Casino area, Rancho Mirage, and Palm Desert), and 4) the City of Indio as the eastern terminus of the Program Corridor.

2.2.3 Build Alternative Option 3 (Indio Terminus with Limited Third Track)

Build Alternative Option 3 includes a total Program Corridor distance of 140.25 miles and consists of a Western Section, terminating at LAUS, and an Eastern Section, terminating at the City of Indio.

Western Section. The Western Section under Build Alternative Option 3 would be the same as that described above under Build Alternative Options 1 and 2.

Eastern Section. The Eastern Section under Build Alternative Option 3 would be the same as that described above under Build Alternative Option 2, except for the following changes:

As part of Build Alternative Option 3, additional infrastructure improvements for the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor have been considered. These potential infrastructure improvements include the addition of station tracks and a third main line track. The addition of station tracks would be the same as described under Build Alternative Options 1 and 2; however, the addition of the third main track would be limited under Build Alternative Option 3 when compared with Build Alternative Options 1 and 2. The limited third track under Build Alternative Option 3 would augment the existing

two main tracks along the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor to the proposed Mid Valley Station Area.

2.3 Construction

2.3.1 Western Section

In the Western Section, existing rail infrastructure would be used to accommodate the proposed service, and no additional track improvements would be required to accommodate the proposed service under all Build Alternative Options. LAUS would serve as the western terminus, and existing stations in the Cities of Fullerton and Riverside would be used, as depicted on Figure 2-1. No new stations or additions to existing stations would be required to accommodate the proposed service under all Build Alternative Options. The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area for potential construction-related impacts on land use within the Western Section is up to 600 feet from either side of the existing railroad centerline.

2.3.2 Eastern Section

In the Eastern Section, proposed new infrastructure improvements under all Build Alternative Options could include sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade-separation structures, and stations to accommodate the proposed service. The Eastern Section would use the existing station in the City of Palm Springs, which is the only existing station in the Eastern Section. Additionally, as depicted on Figure 2-2 and Figure 2-3, up to five new potential stations could be constructed in the following areas: 1) Loma Linda/Redlands Area (serving the Cities of Loma Linda and Redlands), 2) the Pass Area (serving the communities of Beaumont, Banning, and Cabazon), 3) the Mid-Valley (serving the communities of Cathedral City, Thousand Palms, the Agua Caliente Casino area, Rancho Mirage, and Palm Desert), 4) the City of Indio (under all Build Alternative Options), and/or 5) the City of Coachella (under Build Alternative Option 1 only).

The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area for potential construction-related impacts on land use within the Eastern Section is up to 1,000 feet from either side of the centerline, plus a 500-foot buffer for the assessment of indirect impacts, for a total Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area of 1,500 feet from either side of the centerline at each of the individual station location areas. The remaining portion of the Eastern Section Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area encompasses up to 300 feet from the railroad centerline to include non-station-related infrastructure improvements, plus a 500-foot buffer for the assessment of indirect impacts, for a total Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area of 800 feet from the railroad centerline.

2.4 Operation

Passenger train frequencies proposed as part of the Program would consist of the addition of two daily round-trip intercity diesel-powered passenger trains operating the entire length of the Program Corridor between Los Angeles and Indio and/or Coachella, with one morning departure and one afternoon departure from each end of the Program Corridor.

Figure 2-1. Western Section of the Program Corridor (Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3)

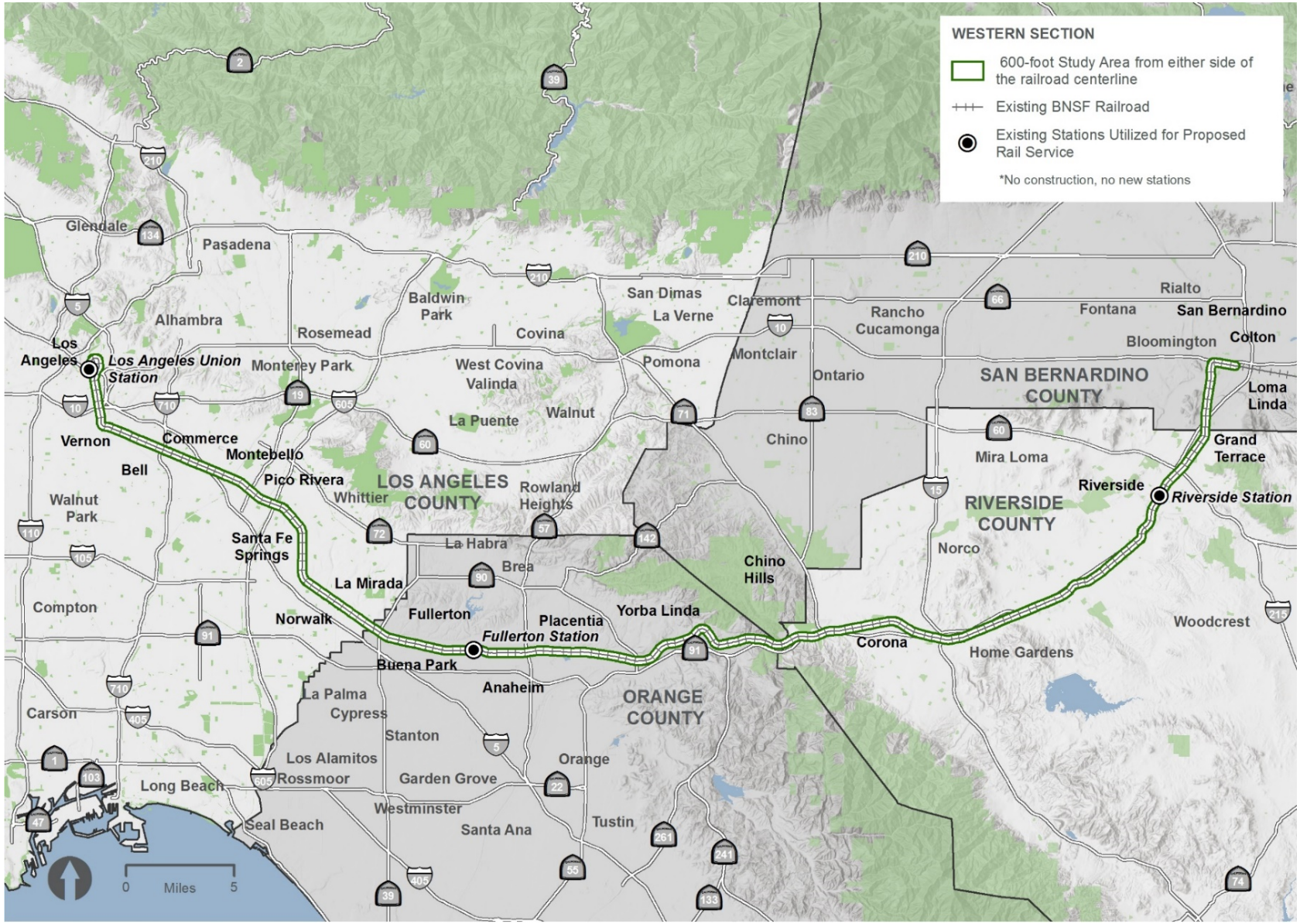

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Figure 2-2. Eastern Section of the Program Corridor (Build Alternative Option 1)

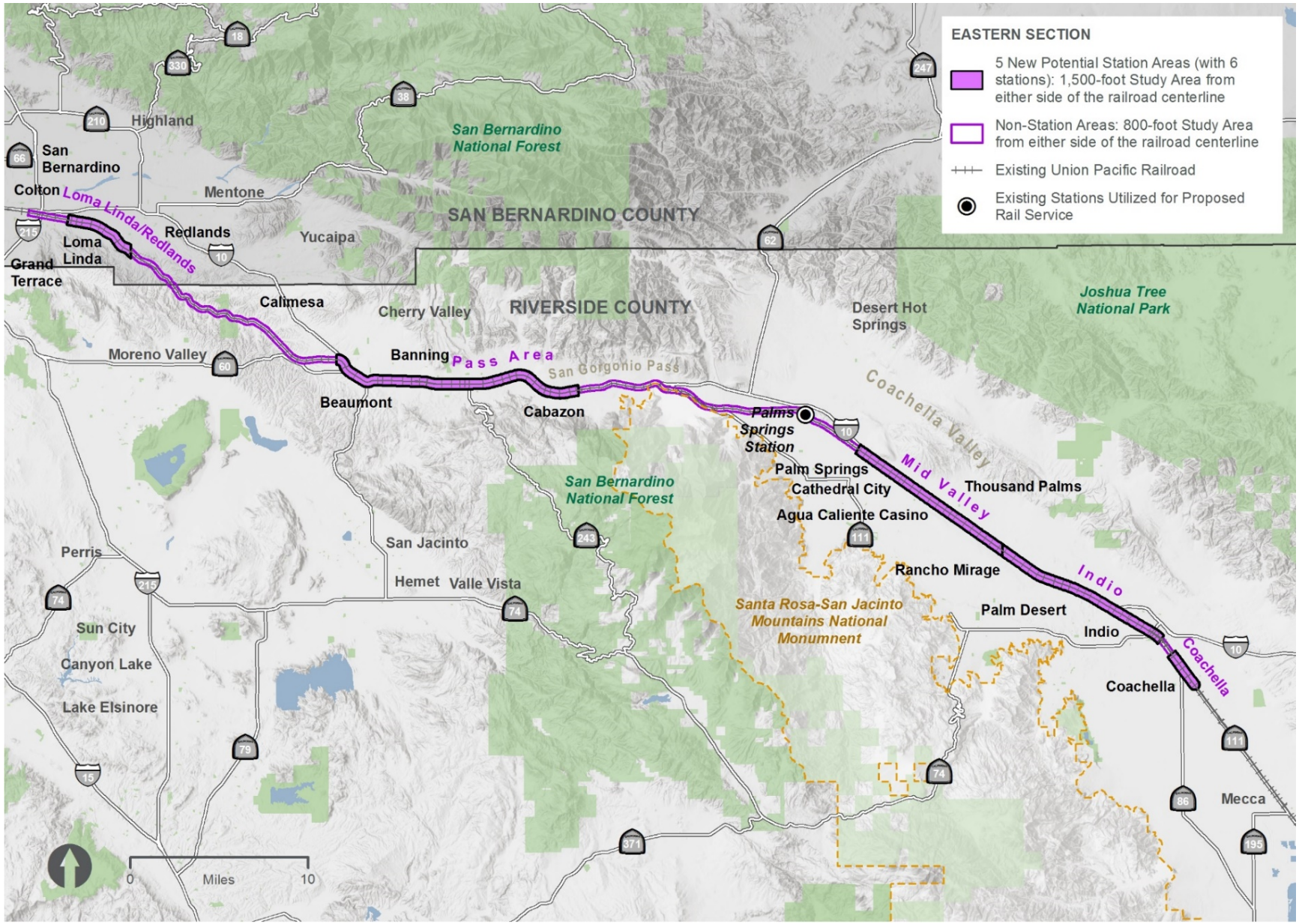

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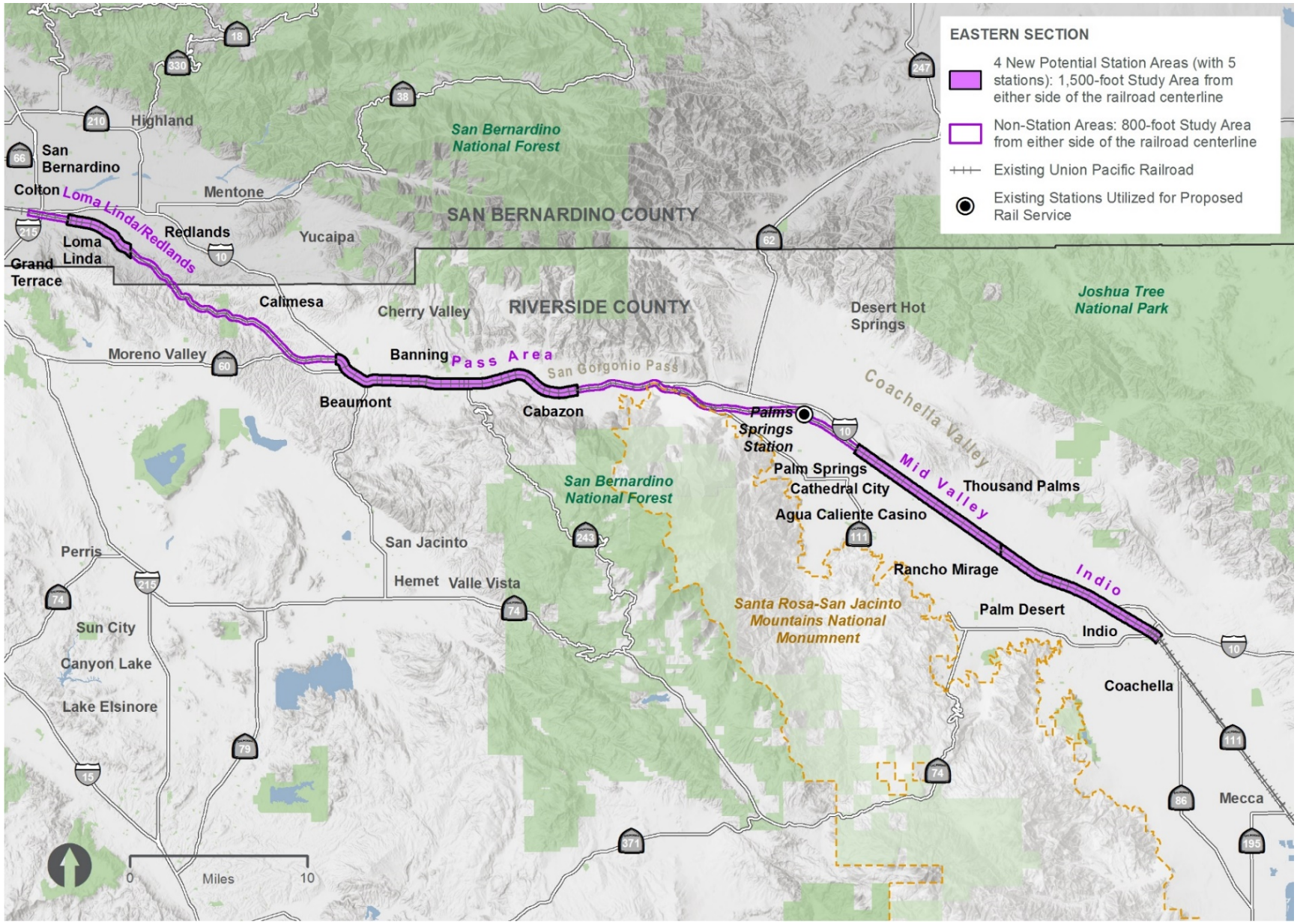
Figure 2-3. Eastern Section of the Program Corridor (Build Alternative Options 2 and 3)



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3 Regulatory Framework

3.1 Federal

3.1.1 Federal Railroad Administration

According to the FRA's *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts* (64 FR 28545, May 26, 1999) Section 14(n)(13) (FRA 1999a), an "EIS should assess the impacts on both passenger and freight transportation, by all modes, from local, regional, national, and international perspectives. The EIS should include a discussion of both construction period and long-term impacts on vehicular traffic congestion."

3.1.2 Federal Land Policy and Management Act

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 Code of Federal Regulations Part 35) provides for the proper management and protection of property and natural and cultural resources within areas under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, including national monuments, federal recreation areas, and conservation areas. It establishes the regulations governing coordination and grants for ROW that cross public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

3.1.3 Farmland Protection Policy Act

The Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC Section 4201–4209 and 7 Code of Federal Regulations Part 658) was established to minimize the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses as part of a federal undertaking. The Farmland Protection Policy Act was intended to assure that federal programs are administered in a way that is compatible with state, local, and private programs to protect farmland. Farmland subject to the Farmland Protection Policy Act includes prime or unique farmlands or farmland that is determined by a state or local agency to be farmland of statewide or local importance. Under 7 Code of Federal Regulations Part 658.1, prime farmland is defined as "land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses." Unique farmland is "land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops."

3.2 State

3.2.1 California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation inventories and categorizes farmlands throughout the state as part of its Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program classifications include:

- Prime Farmland (P): Farmland with the best combination of physical and chemical features able to sustain long-term agricultural production. This land has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to produce sustained high yields. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Statewide Importance (S): Farmland similar to prime farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or less ability to store soil moisture. Land must have been used for irrigated agricultural production at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.
- Unique Farmland (U): Farmland of lesser quality soils used for the production of the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards as found in some climatic zones in California. Land must have been cropped at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.
- Farmland of Local Importance (L): Land of importance to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.
- Grazing Land (G): Land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.
- Urban and Built-up Land (D): Land occupied by structures with a building density of at least 1 unit to 1.5 acre or approximately 6 structures to a 10-acre parcel. This land is used for residential, industrial, commercial, construction, institutional, public administration, railroad and other transportation yards, cemeteries, airports, golf courses, sanitary landfills, sewage treatment, water control structures, and other developed purposes.
- Other Land (X): Land not included in any other mapping category.

3.2.2 California Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act)

In 1965, the state enacted the California Land Conservation Act, more commonly known as the Williamson Act (Government Code Section 51230 et seq.). The Williamson Act provides tax incentives for landowners who enter into contracts with the local government for long-term use restrictions on agricultural and open space land for qualifying properties. Property owners commit their land to farming for a minimum of 10 years and in return receive tax benefits based on their agricultural production rather than on the property's market value. Contracts are automatically renewed unless a notice of non-renewal is issued.

3.3 Regional

3.3.1 Southern California Association of Governments 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy

Southern California Association of Governments' (SCAG) *2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP)/*Sustainable Communities Strategy* (SCS), adopted in April 2016, presents the long-range transportation and land use plan and transportation vision for Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Imperial, Riverside, and Ventura counties, with the overarching goal of integrating strategies for land use and transportation. The RTP portion of the RTP/SCS identifies priorities for transportation planning within the Southern California region, sets goals and policies, and identifies performance measures for transportation improvements to ensure that future projects are consistent with other planning goals for the area. The SCS portion of the RTP/SCS presents an overall land use concept for the region with increasing focus on densification of urban areas and development around transit stations, as well as increased focus on the use of transit and active transportation.

The following SCAG RTP/SCS goals and policies are applicable to the Program:

- Maximize mobility and accessibility for all people and goods in the region
- Ensure travel safety and reliability for all people and goods in the region
- Preserve and ensure a sustainable regional transportation system
- Maximize the productivity of our transportation system
- Encourage land use and growth patterns that facilitate transit and active transportation

3.3.2 County General Plans

The general plans for the four counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino) in the Program Corridor were reviewed to identify the policies and objectives applicable to the Program. Local zoning ordinances are the implementation mechanism for local general plans, and it is important to note that California state law requires that zoning ordinances be consistent with the maps and policies of the general plan (Government Code Section 65680). As such, for the purposes of this evaluation, existing zoning is assumed to be consistent with the designated land uses at representative station area locations. City and local ordinances will be considered during the Tier 2 Project-level analysis once station locations have been identified.

Los Angeles County

The *Los Angeles County General Plan 2035* was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors on October 6, 2015. It provides the policy framework and establishes the long-range vision for Los Angeles County aimed at fostering healthy, livable, and sustainable communities (County of Los Angeles 2015). Policies that are applicable to the Program are listed below.

Land Use Element

Policy Land Use 7.1: Reduce and mitigate the impacts of incompatible land uses, where feasible, using buffers and other design techniques.

Transportation Element

Policy Mobility 4.1: Expand transportation options that reduce automobile dependence.

Policy Mobility 5.3: Maintain transportation ROW corridors for future transportation uses, including bikeways, or new passenger rail or bus services.

Orange County

The County of Orange General Plan (Orange County 2005) is the blueprint for growth and development in the county and provides a comprehensive plan that addresses both the physical attributes of land use and the social aspects, such as economic and housing conditions. The County General Plan Modernization Project was completed in 2005, and the land use element and land use map were updated in 2015. Policies and objectives that are applicable to the Program are listed below.

Land Use Element

Policy 5 Land Use/Transportation Integration: To plan an integrated land use and transportation system that accommodates travel demand for all modes of transit.

Transportation Element

Objective 1.1: Establish a circulation plan that accommodates the General Plan Land Use Element of the county.

Objective 1.2: Establish a circulation plan that is designed to serve as a balanced transportation system (auto, rail, transit, bus, truck, bicycle, pedestrian, etc.).

Objective 6.1: Develop and promote a transportation system and strategies that are consistent with Rule 2202 South Coast Air Quality Management District and the County Transportation Demand Management Ordinance (Ordinance No. 3820).

Riverside County

The comprehensive update to the general plan was adopted in October 2003 (Riverside County 2003) as part of the Riverside County Integrated Project, which is composed of the Community Environmental Transportation Corridor Acceptability Project, a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan, and the Riverside County General Plan. The foundation of the plan is based on 15 consensus planning principles that were developed and endorsed by a coalition of Riverside County stakeholders. The current general plan reflects amendments through 2017. Policies that are applicable to the Program are listed below.

Land Use Element

Policy Land Use (LU) 7.2: Notwithstanding the public facilities designation, public facilities shall also be allowed in any other land use designation except for the Open-Space, Conservation, and Open-Space Conservation Habitat land use designations. For purposes of this policy, a public facility shall include all facilities operated by the federal government, the State of California, the County of Riverside, any special district governed by or operating within the County of Riverside or any city, and all facilities operated by any combination of these agencies.

Policy LU 11.4: Provide options to the automobile in communities, such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian trails, to help improve air quality.

Policy LU 13.3: Locate transit stations in community centers and at places of public, employment, entertainment, recreation, and residential concentrations.

Policy LU 13.7: Review projects for consistency with the county's Transportation Demand Ordinance.

Circulation Element

Policy Circulation (C) 1.1: Design the transportation system to respond to concentrations of population and employment activities, as designated by the Land Use Element and in accordance with the Circulation Plan, Figure C-1.

Policy C 1.3: Support the development of transit connections between Riverside County and regional activity centers in other counties, as well as transit connections that link the community centers located throughout the county and as identified in the Land Use Element and in the individual area plans.

Policy C 1.4: Utilize existing infrastructure and utilities to the maximum extent practicable and provide for the logical, timely, and economically efficient extension of infrastructure and services.

Policy C 1.6: Cooperate with and where appropriate lead local, regional, state, and federal agencies to establish an efficient circulation system.

Policy C 13.1: Support continued development and implementation of the RCTC Rail Program, including new rail lines and stations, the proposed California High Speed Rail System with at least two stations in Riverside County, the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Intercity Rail Service, and the proposed Intercity Rail Corridor between Calexico and Los Angeles.

Policy C 13.2: Support continued improvements to Amtrak and Metrolink rail passenger service within Riverside County and throughout the southern California region.

Policy C 13.4: Construct new grade separations or reconstruct existing grade separations as necessary for the smooth flow of traffic within the county, consistent with plans developed by Western Riverside Council and Coachella Valley Association-Government.

Policy C 13.6: Reserve, where warranted, the future use of abandoned rail ROW for alternative transportation purposes so that an integrated and mutually supportive set of transportation projects may be defined for Riverside County.

Policy C 13.7: Dedicate ROW and land for future transit centers in community centers and/or major activity areas (high concentrations of employment and residential uses) and in areas that minimize noise impacts on surrounding residential and sensitive land uses.

San Bernardino County

The *San Bernardino County General Plan* (County of San Bernardino 2007) text was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on March 13, 2007, and became effective on April 12, 2007, with the latest amendments occurring in 2014. The *San Bernardino County General Plan* provides the basis for most land use decisions and identifies the community's land use, transportation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies that form the basis for local decision-making. The following policies are applicable to the Program.

Land Use Element

Policy Land Use 11.1: Foster intergovernmental cooperation among federal, state, and local agencies on key land use decisions.

Circulation and Infrastructure Element

Policy Circulation and Infrastructure (CI) 1.1: The county's comprehensive transportation system will be developed according to the Circulation Policy Map (the Circulation Element Map), which outlines the ultimate multimodal (non-motorized, highway, and transit) system to accommodate the county's mobility needs and provides objectives for the county to be achieved through coordination and cooperation between the county and the local municipalities in the county, adjacent counties and cities within those counties, Caltrans, and San Bernardino Associated Governments.

Policy CI 2.7: Coordinate with Caltrans, San Bernardino Associated Governments, SCAG, and other agencies regarding transportation system improvements in the county's Measure I and other adopted capital improvement programs.

Policy CI 3.2: Assist Omnitrans, Metrolink, and other transit agencies in coordinating the location and scheduling of public transit routes, services, and facilities for better coordination with bus and rail transit systems.

Policy CI 3.3: Extend public transit between residential areas and industrial/urban employment centers.

Policy CI 4.5: Coordinate with local and regional transportation agencies and cities to plan and construct new multimodal transportation facilities on the basis of this general plan that are consistent throughout the neighboring jurisdictions.

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4 Methodology

The land use assessment was conducted using publicly available electronic geographic information system (GIS) data and county-level general plans. Field surveys of existing land uses were not conducted as part of this evaluation.

This evaluation of land use effects focuses on areas where existing land uses would be converted to transportation-related land uses at up to five representative station area locations, which could be constructed within the City of Loma Linda, the Pass Area (serving the cities of Beaumont, Banning, and Cabazon), the Mid-Valley (serving the cities of Cathedral City, Thousand Palms and the Agua Caliente Casino area, and Rancho Mirage), and the cities of Indio and/or Coachella as the eastern terminus. Each of the counties' general plans were also reviewed to determine general consistency with land use and circulation goals and policies. Potential effects are described qualitatively.

4.1 Data Sources

Land use data was compiled from publicly available electronic GIS data, which relies on local jurisdictions updating and inputting land use data into a publicly available GIS database. While some local jurisdictions have more recent existing or planned land use information than the SCAG data, others did not, or did not provide it publicly. SCAG consolidates and standardizes this local land use data during preparation of its RTPs, making its land use data the most consistent for the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area. SCAG most recently completed this effort in 2008 for existing land uses and 2012 for planned land uses, and, as such, this data represented the most recent and comprehensive information available during preparation of this evaluation.

The existing land uses were primarily based on a 2008 SCAG GIS land use dataset, and the proposed land uses were primarily based on a 2012 SCAG GIS land use dataset. The datasets are parcel based and developed with SCAG 2008 and 2012 land use information, InfoUSA 2008 employment data, 2005 to 2008 new construction data, and inputs from local jurisdictions in the SCAG region. This dataset was used because it includes the most consistent data for all jurisdictions. This dataset was used because it includes the most consistent and comprehensive information available for all jurisdictions that was available during preparation of this analysis.

In addition to SCAG data, online GIS data available from the California Department of Conservation, the United States Department of the Interior, and a variety of other sources were used to identify agricultural and forest resources with the potential to occur within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area. Specifically, the following data sources were reviewed:

- **Farmlands:** The California Important Farmland Finder dataset (California Department of Conservation 2020) was consulted.
- **Agricultural Preserve Lands:** To identify designated agricultural preserve lands or lands under the Williamson Act Program, data from the California Department of Conservation was consulted.
- **Forest Lands:** The United States Forest Service Land Ownership database was consulted.

4.2 Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area

Much of the Program Corridor from Los Angeles to Redlands is urbanized. The Eastern Section of the Program Corridor is less urbanized with vacant land comprising of the largest land use category.

Land use data is presented quantitatively by county, and land use impacts were evaluated qualitatively by county. Tier 2 Project-level analysis would address site-specific potential impacts resulting from construction of new stations, maintenance facilities, and other infrastructure, potential land use compatibility effects, and potential conflicts with existing plans and policies for jurisdictions where stations may be implemented along the Program Corridor.

5 Existing Conditions

The Western Section of the Program Corridor spans 68 miles from downtown Los Angeles to the City of Colton and traverses approximately 19 cities within Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties, including the City of Colton. The Eastern Section of the Program Corridor spans 76 miles and traverses approximately 14 cities within San Bernardino and Riverside, including the City of Colton.

The largest assemblage of land use categories for the Western Section include transportation, communication, and utilities uses, which comprise nearly 27 percent of the total land uses. Transportation, communication, and utilities also comprise approximately 27 percent of the land uses within the Eastern Section; however, vacant land comprises the largest land use category at approximately 42 percent. Specific existing land use information is provided for each section below.

5.1 Western Section

5.1.1 Existing Land Uses

Table 5-1 summarizes the existing land uses within the Western Section of the Program Corridor. As depicted, transportation, communication, and utilities uses comprise the largest portion of land within the Western Section of the Program Corridor, totaling 3,283.8 acres of area and nearly 32.5 percent of the total area. Industrial uses comprise the second largest land use category, with a total acreage of 2,975.4 and 29.4 percent of the total area. Single family residential uses comprise the third largest land use category, totaling 1,230.3 acres, or 15.9 percent of the land uses in the total area. Including multifamily residential and other residential categories increases the percentage of residential uses to 19 percent.

Table 5-1. Western Section: Existing Land Uses

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	61.6	0.6
Commercial services	1,169.1	11.6
Industrial	2,975.4	29.4
Mixed commercial/industrial	57.3	0.6

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Mixed urban	10.1	0.1
Residential – multifamily	304.6	3.0
Residential – other	68.1	0.7
Residential – single family	1,230.3	12.2
Open space and recreation	208.6	2.1
Transportation, communications, utilities	3,283.8	32.5
Under construction	53.5	0.5
Vacant	687.6	6.8
Total	10,109.1	100

Source: SCAG 2008

5.1.2 Planned (Future) Land Uses

For the purposes of this evaluation, planned land uses include the future land use designations or zoning classifications assigned to parcels (usually vacant or underutilized) in the local jurisdictions' general plans and/or zoning codes. Table 5-2 summarizes the planned land uses within the Western Section of the Program Corridor. Industrial uses are the largest planned land use category within the Western Section of the Program Corridor.[1] Under planned conditions, industrial and manufacturing uses would increase to 4,093.1 acres, or approximately 40.5 percent of the total area, which would constitute an approximately 11.1 percent increase over the existing built environment. Transportation, communication, and utilities' uses would drop to 2,295.8 acres, or approximately 22.7 percent of the total area. Total residential area would increase to approximately 1,885 acres, or 18.3 percent of the area, as opposed to 15.9 percent under existing conditions.

[1] The slight discrepancy between the total acreage between the existing land uses and planned land uses is a result of how existing versus planned land uses are mapped and coded in the GIS data.

Table 5-2. Western Section: Planned (Future) Land Uses

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	0.0	0
Commercial Services	661.4	6.5
Industrial	4,093.1	40.5
Mixed commercial and industrial	71.7	0.7
Mixed urban	0.0	0
Open space and recreation	733.7	7.3
Public facilities	366.3	3.6
Residential – multifamily	398.7	3.9
Residential – other	258.3	2.3
Residential – single family	1,228.0	12.1
Transportation, communications, utilities	2,295.8	22.7
Under construction	1.9	0.1
Vacant	0.0	0
Total	**10,109.1**	**100**

Source: SCAG 2012

5.2 Eastern Section

5.2.1 Existing Land Uses

Table 5-3 summarizes the existing land uses within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor where Build Alternative Option 1 is planned. As depicted, vacant land comprises the largest land use category in the Eastern Section, with 8,697.5 acres, or 40.2 percent. Transportation, communication, and utilities uses comprise the second largest portion of land within the Eastern Section, totaling 5,967.7 acres and a little over 27.6 percent of the total area. Commercial services uses, with 1,773.3 acres and 8.2 percent of the area, comprise a distant third of the land uses within the Eastern Section. Residential uses within the Eastern Section include a relatively small proportion of

the total area, with a total of 1,786.3 acres devoted to single family and multifamily residential, as well as other residential uses, or just under 8.2 percent total.

Table 5-3. Eastern Section: Existing Land Uses (Build Alternative Option 1)

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	1,460.3	6.7
Commercial services	1,773.3	8.2
Public facilities	403.4	1.9
Industrial	907.5	4.2
Mixed commercial/industrial	41.2	0.2
Mixed urban	0.0	0
Residential – multifamily	192.9	0.9
Residential – other	399.5	1.8
Residential – single family	1,193.9	5.5
Open space and recreation	748.3	3.5
Transportation, communications, utilities	5,967.7	27.6
Under construction	268.5	1.2
Vacant	8,697.5	40.2
Total	**21,650.6**	**100**

Source: SCAG 2008

Table 5-4 summarizes the existing land uses within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor where Build Alternative Options 2 and 3 are planned. As depicted, vacant land comprises the largest land use category in the Eastern Section, with 8,480.7 acres, or 41.2 percent. Transportation, communication, and utilities uses comprise the second largest portion of land within the Eastern Section, totaling 5,683.4 acres and a little over 27.6 percent of the total area. Commercial services uses, with 1,648.0 acres and 8.0 percent of the area, comprise a distant third of the land uses within the Eastern Section. Residential uses within the Eastern Section include a relatively small proportion of the total area, with a total of 1,390.5 acres devoted to single family and multifamily residential, as well as other residential uses, or just under 8.1 percent total.

Table 5-4. Eastern Section: Existing Land Uses (Build Alternative Options 2 and 3)

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	1,239.9	6.0
Commercial services	1,648.0	8.0
Industrial	781.7	3.8
Mixed commercial/industrial	41.2	0.2
Mixed urban	0.0	0
Open space and recreation	740.9	3.6
Public facilities	0.0	0
Residential – multifamily	192.9	0.9
Residential – other	397.3	1.9
Residential – single family	1,100.3	5.3
Transportation, communications, utilities	5,683.4	27.6
Under construction	268.5	1.3
Vacant	8,480.7	41.2
Total	**20,585.1**	**100**

5.2.2 Planned (Future) Land Uses

Table 5-5 summarizes the planned land uses within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor where Build Alternative Option 1 is planned. Buildout of the counties' general plans in the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor would result in residential uses becoming the largest land use category within the total area.[2] Under planned conditions, residential uses would increase to 5,656.2 acres, or approximately 26 percent of the total area, which would constitute an approximately 18 percent increase over existing residential uses. Transportation, communication, and utilities uses, which comprise the second largest land use in the Eastern Section, would

[2] The slight discrepancy between the total acreage between the existing land uses and planned land uses is a result of how existing versus planned land uses are mapped and coded in the GIS data.

decrease under planned conditions to 4,685.2 acres, or approximately 21.6 percent of the total area. Open space, protected lands, and preserve/wildlife sanctuary space would become the third largest land use in the Eastern Section, with approximately 4,268.2 acres, or 19.7 percent of the area. Commercial, including mixed commercial and retail/shopping uses, would also comprise about 16.8 percent of the total area.

Table 5-5. Eastern Section: Planned (Future) Land Uses (Build Alternative Option 1)

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	119.2	0.6
Commercial services	2,374.2	11.0
Industrial	2,585.9	11.9
Mixed commercial and industrial	1,246.1	5.8
Mixed urban	312.1	0
Open space and recreation	4,268.2	19.7
Public facilities	403.4	1.9
Residential – multifamily	509.7	2.4
Residential – other	1,310.3	6.1
Residential – single family	3,836.2	17.7
Transportation, communications, utilities	4,685.2	21.6
Under construction	0.0	0
Vacant	0.2	0
Total	**21,650.6**	**100**

Source: SCAG 2012

Table 5-6 summarizes the planned land uses within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor where Build Alternative Options 2 and 3 are planned. Buildout of the counties' general plans in the Eastern Section of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area would result in residential uses becoming

the largest land use category within the total area.[3] Under planned conditions, residential uses would increase to 5,373.6 acres, or approximately 26 percent of the total area, which would constitute an approximately 18 percent increase over existing residential uses. Transportation, communication, and utilities uses, which comprise the second largest land use in the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area, would decrease under planned conditions to 4,518.6 acres, or approximately 22 percent of the total area. Open space, protected lands, and preserve/wildlife sanctuary space would become the third largest land use in the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area, with approximately 4,243.7 acres, or 20.6 percent of the area. Commercial, including mixed commercial and retail/shopping uses, would also comprise about 16.7 percent of the total area.

Table 5-6. Eastern Section: Planned (Future) Land Uses (Build Alternative Options 2 and 3)

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agriculture	119.2	0.6
Commercial services	2186.9	10.6
Industrial	2208.1	10.7
Mixed commercial and industrial	1246.1	6.1
Mixed urban	312.1	1.5
Residential – multifamily	498.3	2.4
Residential – other	1,305.2	6.3
Residential – single family	3,570.1	17.3
Open space and recreation	4,243.7	20.6
Public facilities	376.8	1.8
Transportation, communications, utilities	4,518.6	22.0
Under construction	0.0	0
Vacant	0.2	0

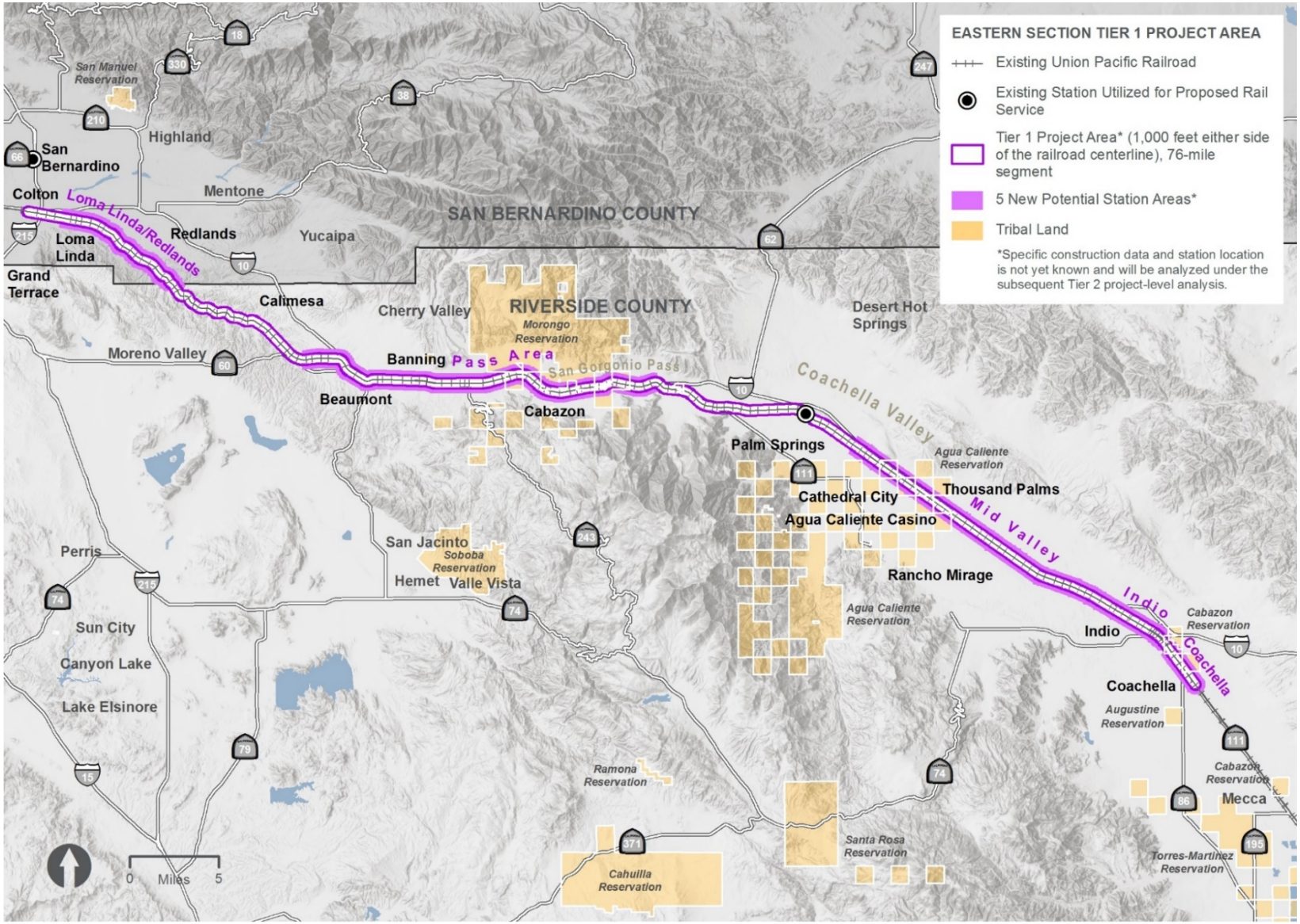
[3] The slight discrepancy between the total acreage between the existing land uses and planned land uses is a result of how existing versus planned land uses are mapped and coded in the GIS data.

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Total	**20,585.1**	**100**

Tribal Lands

The Eastern Section of the Program Corridor also includes tribal lands, as depicted on Figure 5-1; including 1,175.89 acres of Morongo Reservation, 1,011.52 acres of Agua Caliente Reservation, and 352.55 acres of Cabazon Reservation.

Figure 5-1 Tribal Lands in the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor



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6 Environmental Consequences

The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation of land use compatibility focuses on areas where the existing uses could be converted to transportation-related land uses and, specifically, where new facilities would be anticipated (i.e., representative station area locations). The Program's consistency with county and metropolitan planning organizations land use plans is also evaluated.

6.1 No Build Alternative

Under the No Build Alternative, a new passenger rail system would not be built, and effects on land uses would not be anticipated, beyond those that could occur as a result of other approved projects. The No Build Alternative would not implement the Program associated with this service-level evaluation and would not meet the Purpose and Need of the Program. Counties and cities in the Program Corridor would continue to grow, which would increase regional transportation demand. Therefore, the No Build Alternative assumes completion of those reasonably foreseeable transportation, development, and infrastructure projects that are already in progress; are programmed; or are included in the fiscally constrained RTP.

Several existing and committed transportation improvement projects would still occur in the Western Section under the No Build Alternative. The projects in the Western Section include the Rosecrans/Marquardt Grade Separation Project in the City of Santa Fe Springs, construction of 15 miles of the Third Main Line Track Project within BNSF's existing railroad between Los Angeles and Fullerton, the California High-Speed Rail Authority Los Angeles to Anaheim project, the Link Union Station Project, and three additional grade-separation projects on BNSF's San Bernardino Subdivision in the City of Santa Fe Springs. These projects would result in an increase in freight service, as well as allow for an increase in passenger rail services in the Western Section. The expected increase in rail service would occur within the existing rail ROW.

In the Eastern Section, the No Build Alternative would be similar to existing conditions for passenger rail and transit services that connect the Coachella Valley and San Gorgonio Pass area with the greater Los Angeles metropolitan area, as well as forecasted increases in freight traffic. The five intercity passenger rail and bus services that currently provide these connections are anticipated to remain unchanged from the existing conditions. No new growth services providing regional linkages in the Eastern Section are programmed or funded for implementation at this time. In addition, there are no programmed or funded infrastructure projects in the Eastern Section under the No Build Alternative.

The counties and cities in the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area would continue to grow, which would increase regional transportation demand. Under the No Build Alternative, accommodation of this additional transportation demand would be limited by the existing transportation infrastructure's capacity and capacity increases resulting from other approved transportation projects in the region. The No Build Alternative assumes completion of those reasonably foreseeable transportation, development, and infrastructure projects that are already in progress; are programmed; or are included in the fiscally constrained RTP. Implementation of these other projects may result in conflicts with plans and policies for these transportation projects. The No Build Alternative is not consistent with federal, state, and local plans and policies that promote expansion of existing transportation options, as well as multimodal connectivity throughout the region.

Under the No Build Alternative, passenger rail service between Coachella and Los Angeles would not be established and land would not be allocated for rail infrastructure or station facilities. This may prevent potential displacements of existing and planned land uses but would increase the likelihood for displacing land uses adjacent to existing highways such as Interstate10, State Route 60, and State Route 111, which would likely need to be widened to accommodate the projected demands for capacity as population in the region increases. Land uses adjacent to major highway corridors would likely be affected by increased traffic congestion, which may include time delays and increased exposure to noise and vehicle emissions.

An increase in traffic and vehicle miles traveled is expected with the No Build Alternative because more cars would be on the roadways compared with what would occur with Program implementation. Therefore, traffic congestion is likely to worsen with the No Build Alternative, resulting in air quality effects and potentially additional noise effects on the surrounding land uses, which could disrupt established communities adjacent to existing transportation corridors. Because adding travel lanes for vehicles takes more land than rail facilities to move the same volume of people, more land in the region would need to be allocated to transportation facilities, precluding other land uses. However, while community disruption and division of established communities related to construction and operation of the Build Alternative Options, if Tier 2 Project-level analyses were to identify an effect, this effect would be avoided under the No Build Alternative.

6.2 Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3

6.2.1 Physical Division or Disruption of an Established Community

Western Section

Construction

The Western Section utilizes existing rail infrastructure, and no additional track improvements would be required to accommodate the proposed service. No new stations or construction to existing stations would be required to accommodate the proposed service. As such, construction activities are not anticipated to physically divide or disrupt an established community. When compared with the No Build Alternative, disruption (including division) to existing communities would be negligible because no additional construction activities would occur within the Western Section under Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3.

Operation

Increased rail activity resulting from Operation of Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3 within the Western Section would not result in any physical divisions of established communities as the addition of two daily round-trip passenger trains would travel within an existing railroad ROW. The two additional round-trip intercity passenger trains would be added on existing rail lines currently used by freight, passenger, and commuter trains. Current (2018) daily rail traffic volumes on the Western Section (as shown in Chapter 2of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) vary by segment (FRA and RCTC 2021). The highest density segment is between Los Angeles and Fullerton and has an average of 86 daily trains, while the lowest density segment is between Fullerton and Atwood and has an average of 43 daily trains. An additional two daily round-trip intercity passenger trains, even when compared with the lowest density segment, would represent a minor increase in train activity compared with current (2018) traffic volume along the existing railroad ROW. In 2024 and 2044, the Program would add the same number of rail operations to higher baseline conditions. Therefore, the Program's effects in 2024 (see Chapter 2 of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) and 2044 (see Chapter 2 of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) would be lower than those evaluated under existing conditions for the lowest density segment and would not result in substantial disruption of activities occurring at the adjacent land uses.

Eastern Section

Construction

The Eastern Section of the Program Corridor would include infrastructure improvements, such as sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade-separation structures, and stations, to accommodate the proposed service and would be informed by the results of rail operations simulation modeling. The majority of construction activities would occur within or directly adjacent to the existing railroad ROW and, therefore, would not be anticipated to physically divide established communities; however, the construction of up to five new potential stations would require acquisition of parcels within local communities adjacent to the railroad ROW once design and location is determined.

Construction in the Eastern Section could occur in close proximity to existing sensitive land uses. Based on planned (future) land uses, a large increase in sensitive receptors is anticipated in the Eastern Section of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area (18 percent increase in residential uses). Noise and traffic generated by construction activities could temporarily disrupt residential or other sensitive land uses in the Eastern Section. The temporary changes associated with Build Alternative Option 1 would have moderate effects on certain sensitive land uses adjacent to where construction could occur. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Option 2 would have slightly reduced construction effects due to a shorter route alignment and reduced station options (i.e., less construction activity and, as such, fewer sensitive land uses).

Site-specific land use compatibility effects, along with measures to minimize potential disruption to, and land use compatibility effects on, adjacent land uses would be considered during Tier 2 Project-level analysis.

Operation

Operational activity would increase within the Eastern Section of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area. Current (2018) daily rail traffic volumes on the Eastern Section (as shown in Chapter 2 of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) average 43 daily trains along the Colton-Coachella segment, consisting of freight and passenger trains (FRA and RCTC 2021). The addition of two daily round-trip intercity passenger trains would represent a minor increase in train activity compared with current (2018) traffic volume along the existing railroad ROW. In 2024 and 2044, the Program would add the same number of rail operations to higher baseline conditions. Therefore, the Program's effects in 2024 (see Chapter 2 of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) and 2044 (see Chapter 2 of the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR) would be lower than those evaluated under existing conditions and would not result in substantial disruption of activities occurring at adjacent land uses.

Within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor, Build Alternative Option 1 would include the operation of a passenger rail system including station facilities. The majority of operational activities would occur within or directly adjacent to the existing railroad ROW, and, therefore, would not be anticipated to result in the physical division of existing land uses. Depending on where the station facilities are located, effects on sensitive land use could occur in the form of increased noise and traffic. However, operation of the passenger rail system would also provide an alternative transportation option and additional opportunities for transit-orientated development within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor.

6.2.2 Consistency with Plans and Policies

The following evaluation considered the Program's consistency with all of the plans and policies discussed in Section 3, including SCAG's RTP/SCS, and the general plans for Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties.

Western Section

Construction

The Build Alternative Options would not require construction of new stations or construction at existing stations, new track or extensions to existing track, or the addition of sidings, wayside signals, drainage, or at-grade separations within the Western Section of the Program Corridor. As such, the Western Section would be consistent with existing plans and policies that promote continued and/or expansion of corridor service.

Operation

Operation of the Build Alternative Options would increase rail service along existing rail tracks by the addition of two round-trip intercity passenger trains through largely built-out urban areas. The Build Alternative Options would be consistent with policies related to interagency coordination to meet regional transit goals, including the following plans that provide for increased rail service and connections in the Program Corridor (LAUS to Coachella):

- 2013 California State Rail Plan (Caltrans 2013)
- *10-Year Strategic Plan 2015 – 2025* (Southern California Regional Rail Authority 2015)
- California Transportation Plan 2040 (Caltrans 2016)
- 2016 RTP/SCS (SCAG 2016)
- 2018 California State Rail Plan (Caltrans 2018)

From an overall regional perspective, the Program would expand existing transportation options and foster multimodal connectivity throughout the region, consistent with these plans and local county land use and circulation policies.

While the Build Alternative Options would result in an increase in train operations (two additional daily round-trip intercity passenger trains), no land acquisition or redesignation/rezoning of any parcels is required, and as such, would be consistent with existing land use designations of the general plans.

Eastern Section

Construction

The Build Alternative Options may require the construction of new facilities, such as sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade-separated structures, and stations. In the Eastern Section, the existing station in the City of Palm Springs would be utilized. Additionally, up to five new potential stations could be constructed within Loma Linda/Redlands area, the Pass Area (serving the cities of Beaumont, Banning, and Cabazon), the Mid-Valley (serving the cities of Cathedral City, Thousand Palms and the Agua Caliente Casino area, and Rancho Mirage), and the cities of Indio and/or Coachella as the eastern terminus.

Where infrastructure would occur primarily within the existing railroad ROW, no conflicts with existing adopted plans and policies would occur and environmental impacts would be minimized. However, construction of stations may require land use acquisition and potential amendments to local planning documents. A full land use consistency analyses would be required at the Tier 2 Project-level analysis to determine if the planned stations are consistent with the local general plans and/or municipal codes (i.e., zoning). When compared with the No Build Alternative, effects would be moderate under Build Alternative Options. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Option 2 would have slightly reduced effects due to reduced station options. However, the magnitude of effects would be similar for Build Alternative Option 2 and considered moderate when compared with the No Build Alternative. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1 or 2, Build Alternative Option 3 may have slightly reduced effects due to a slightly smaller footprint associated with a shorter route alignment, reduced station options, and reduced third rail track infrastructure.

Operation

Many of the policies discussed above for the Build Alternative Options on the Western Section would be applicable to the portion of the Build Alternative Options in the Eastern Section. Specifically, the Build Alternative Options would particularly be consistent with Policy C 13.1 of the Riverside County

General Plan, which seeks to "support continued development and implementation of the RCTC Rail Program, including new rail lines and stations, the proposed California High Speed Rail System with at least two stations in Riverside County, the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Intercity Rail Service, and the proposed Intercity Rail Corridor between Calexico and Los Angeles."

6.2.3 Agricultural Resource Effects

Western Section

Construction

No construction activities would be required to implement any of the Build Alternative Options within the Western Section of the Program Corridor because the existing railroad ROW and stations from LAUS to Colton would be used. The Build Alternative Options would not require construction of new stations, new track, or extensions to existing track, or the addition of sidings, wayside signals, drainage, or at-grade separations within the Western Section of the Program Corridor. When compared with the No Build Alternative, conversion of agriculturally mapped lands to transportation uses would not occur and effects would be negligible within the Western Section under Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3.

Operation

Operation of Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3 within the Western Section would not result in effects on agricultural resources as the additional train trips would travel within an existing railroad ROW. When compared with the No Build Alternative, effects on agricultural resources would be negligible because no additional infrastructure improvements are planned within the Western Section under Build Alternative Options 1, 2, and 3.

Eastern Section

Construction

Construction of Build Alternative Option 1, 2, or 3 in the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor would require the construction of rail stations, reconfiguration of existing or creation of new rail facilities, and potential ROW acquisition. These would require the conversion of non-transportation land to a transportation use. The site-specific design that would be developed in later Tier 2/Project-level phases would determine the extent to which land use conversions occur. If the rail infrastructure or station facility is within the ROW of, or closely parallel to, an existing transportation corridor, the extent of land conversion would be minimal. However, the farther rail infrastructure or a station facility departs from an existing transportation feature, the greater the likelihood for land use

conversion, ranging from building on vacant/undeveloped land to potential displacement of existing structures.

If a passenger rail system is constructed and operated within the existing rail ROW, relatively few ROW acquisitions would be required. However, the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area allows for infrastructure and station facilities to be located beyond the limits of the existing rail ROW, which would require acquisition of land not designated for transportation uses. Which agricultural land uses would be affected by the future construction and operation of a passenger rail system, and to what extent, cannot be determined at this time.

If agricultural mapped lands within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor are converted to a transportation use, it would be considered an adverse effect. Agricultural lands are considered a finite and unique resource: once agricultural land is converted to other uses, that agricultural land is effectively eliminated. When compared with the No Build Alternative, Build Alternative Option 1 could have a substantial effect on agricultural resources within the Eastern Section of the Program Corridor. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Option 2 would have slightly reduced effects due to a shorter route alignment and reduced station options. However, the magnitude of effects would be similar for Build Alternative Option 2 and considered substantial when compared with the No Build Alternative. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1 or 2, Build Alternative Option 3 may have slightly reduced effects due to a slightly smaller footprint associated with a shorter route alignment, reduced station options, and reduced third rail track infrastructure. However, the magnitude of effects would be similar for Build Alternative Option 3 and considered substantial when compared with the No Build Alternative. Detailed analysis of ROW acquisition impacts would be completed in a Tier 2/Project-level analysis.

Operation

Once construction ceases, operation of the new railroad infrastructure and stations under the Build Alternative Options would not be anticipated to require further conversion of agricultural lands. Operational effects on agricultural resources would be negligible when compared with the No Build Alternative. When compared with Build Alternative Option 1, Build Alternative Options 2 and 3 would have the same magnitude of effect and considered negligible when compared with the No Build Alternative.

7 Tier 2 Environmental Review Considerations

The Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR evaluation provides an overview of potential effects resulting from development of the Build Alternative Options. Specific station locations, project design, and construction methods have not been determined.

Tier 2 Project-level analysis would address site-specific potential effects resulting from construction and operation of infrastructure improvements (such as sidings, additional main line track, wayside signals, drainage, grade-separation structures, and stations). The Tier 2 Project-level analysis would consider site-specific land use compatibility effects and consistency with established land use plans and policies. In addition, Project-specific consistency analyses would be conducted for stations that require acquisition of parcels and general plan amendments to ensure proposed land uses would be consistent with surrounding uses and plans and policies, as well as ensuring that stations are located near community centers.

Regarding potential station locations, disruption of activities at sensitive land uses adjacent to station locations may require mitigation in the form of sound barriers (walls, landscaping, etc.).

Relative to construction activities required to implement the railroad infrastructure improvements, mitigation measures that would reduce disturbance of construction activities at nearby sensitive land uses could include, but is not limited to:

- Construction best management practices, such as sound barriers
- Limitations to hours of construction (e.g., 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. during weekdays)
- Watering grading areas
- Specifications for construction equipment and idling times
- Preparation of a construction management plan providing measures that minimize effects on populations and communities within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area by providing Project construction notifications and information, as well as include actions pertaining to visual protection, air quality, safety controls, noise controls, and traffic controls to minimize effects on populations and communities within the Tier 1/Program EIS/EIR Study Area

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