DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Memorandum

To: **PROJECT FILE**

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From: Samer Momani, Associate Environmental Planner
Caltrans District 07
Division of Environmental Planning

Subject: **Farmland Report for the High Desert Corridor (HDC) Project**

The objectives of the Farmland Report are to describe existing farmland and agricultural resources within the High Desert Corridor (HDC) Project area and its vicinity, identify potential impacts on these lands and resources, and recommend avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures. The content of the Farmland Report will support the preparation of the HDC Project's Draft and Final Environmental Impact Report/Statement, Draft Community Impacts Assessment, as well as the HDC Project Environmental Commitment Record.

1. HDC Project description

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), in cooperation with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), proposes construction of the High Desert Corridor (HDC) as a new transportation facility in the High Desert region of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. The proposed 63-mile-long west-east facility would provide route continuity and relieve traffic congestion between State Route (SR) 18 and United States Highway 395 (US 395) in San Bernardino County with SR-14 in Los Angeles County. The HDC Project would comprise of one or more of the following major components, including highway, tollway, rail transit, bikeway, and recommendation for green energy facilities. Figures 1-1 and 1-2 are HDC Project vicinity and location maps, respectively.

1.1 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed HDC Project is to improve west-east mobility through the High Desert region of Southern California by addressing present and future travel demand and mobility needs within the Antelope and Victor valleys. The proposed HDC Project is intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Increase capacity of west-east transportation facilities to accommodate existing and future transportation demand
- Improve travel safety and reliability within the High Desert region
- Improve the regional goods movement network
- Provide improved access and connectivity to regional transportation facilities, including airports and existing and future passenger rail systems, which include the proposed California High Speed Rail (HSR) system and the proposed XpressWest HSR system
- Contribute to state greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals through the use of green energy features

The specific needs to be addressed by the proposed HDC Project include:

- Recent and future planned population growth within the High Desert region
- Limited and unreliable west-east connectivity within the High Desert region
- Regional demands for goods movement to support the growth of the regional economy
- Future demands for the use of green energy, including sustainability and green energy provisions in state law and policy

Figure 1-1 HDC Project Vicinity Map

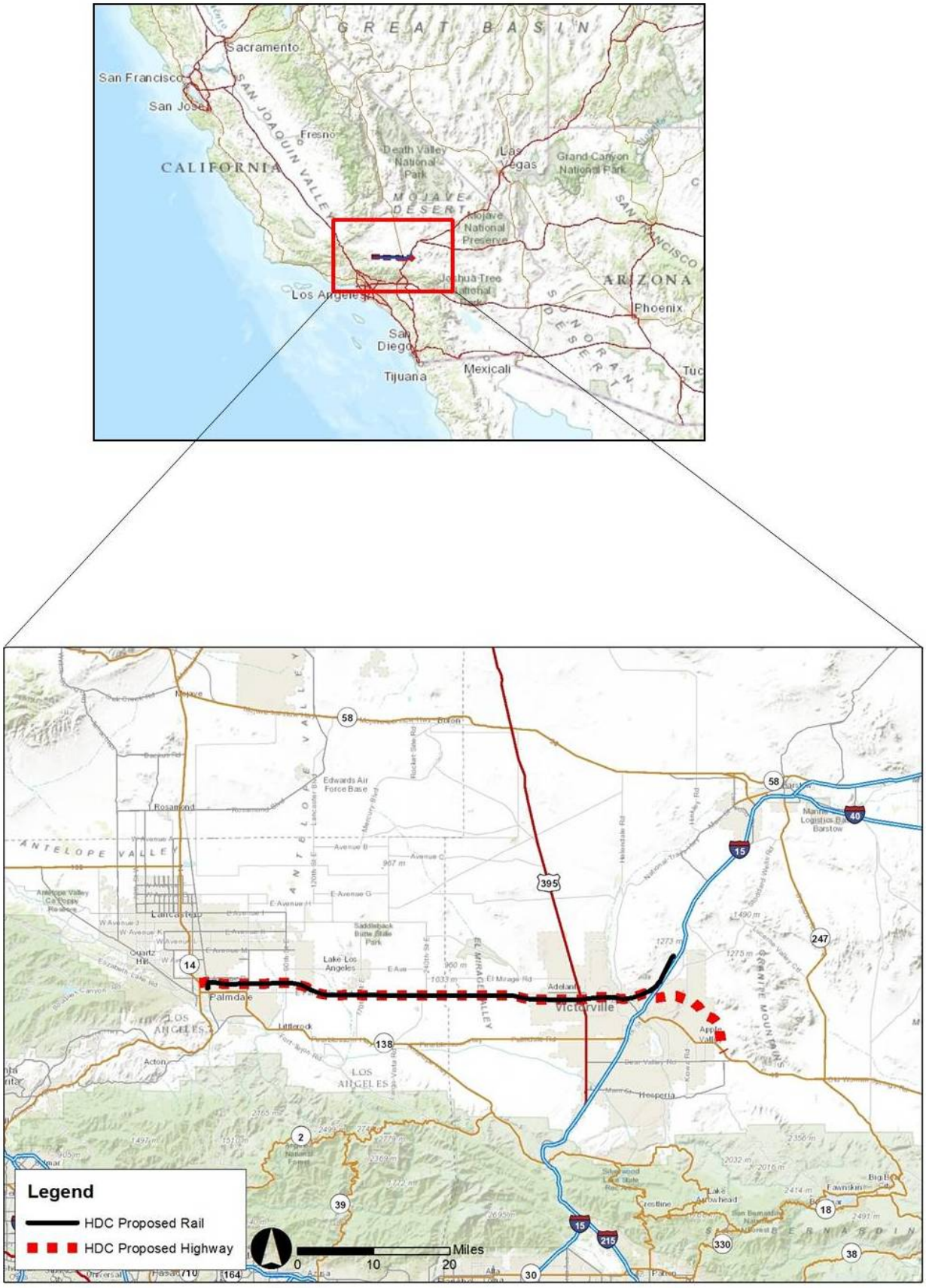
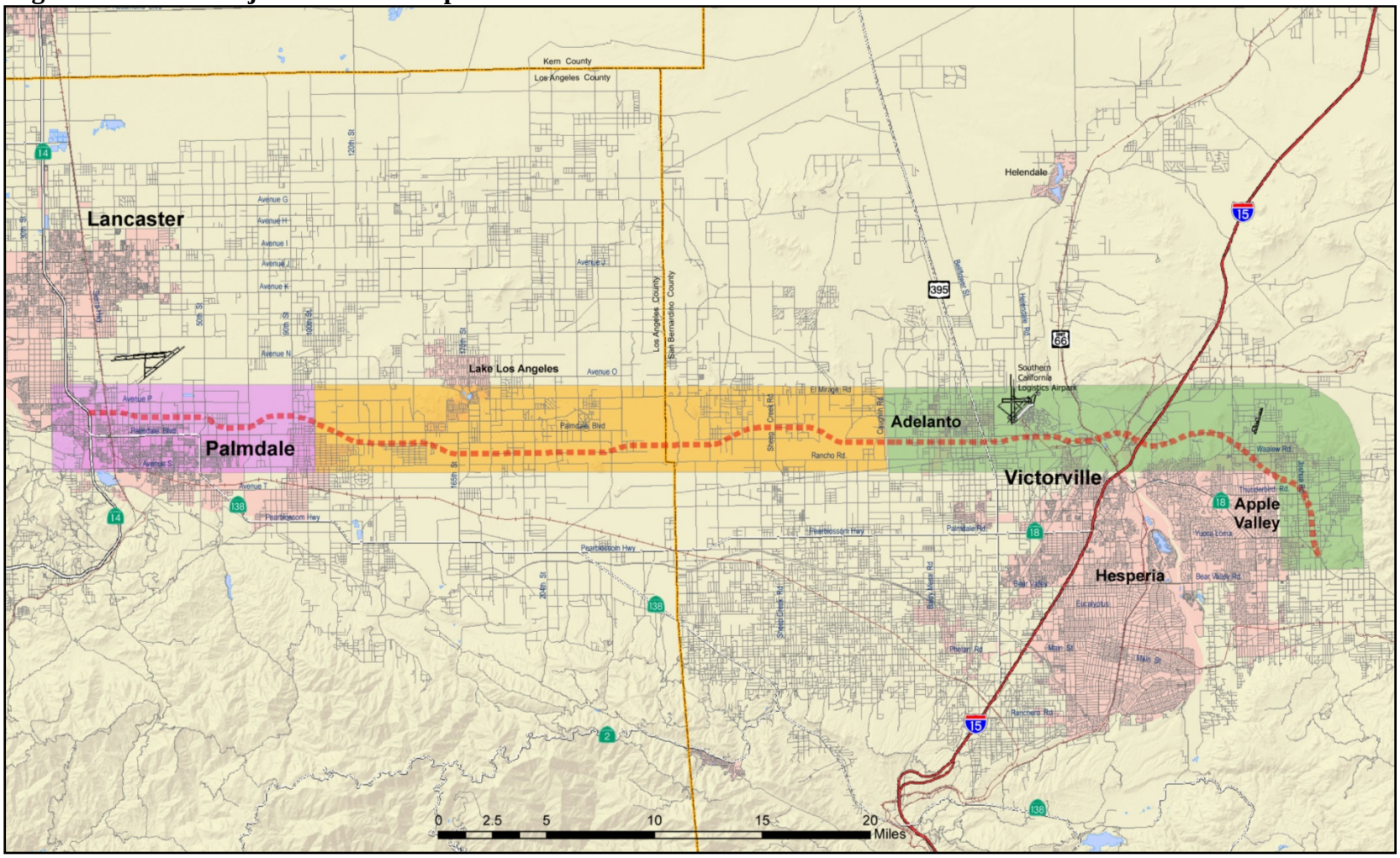


Figure 1-2 HDC Project Location Map



ANTELOPE VALLEY	HIGH DESERT	VICTOR VALLEY
Los Angeles County	**Los Angeles County–San Bernardino County**	**San Bernardino County**
Lancaster, Palmdale	Lake Los Angeles, El Mirage	Adelanto, Victorville, Apple Valley, Hesperia

1.2 HDC Project Alternatives

Several HDC Project alternatives and design variations have been considered and evaluated. A No Build Alternative and four build alternatives were selected for detailed evaluation in the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement.

No Build Alternative

Under the No Build alternative, no new transportation infrastructure would be built within the HDC Project area to connect Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties aside from existing SR-138 safety corridor improvements in Los Angeles County and SR-18 corridor improvements in San Bernardino County. Traffic circulation and congestion currently experienced on Palmdale Boulevard, Air Expressway, and Happy Trails Highway (existing SR-18) would remain. The no action alternative functions as a baseline to compare against all of the proposed build alternatives.

Freeway/Expressway Alternative (Avenue P-8, I-15, and SR-18)

This alternative would consist of a combination of a controlled-access freeway and an expressway. It generally would follow Avenue P-8 in Los Angeles County and just south of El Mirage Road in San Bernardino County. This alternative then extends east to Air Expressway Road near I-15 and curves south, terminating at Bear Valley Road. The incorporation of green energy technologies and a bike path along segments of the alternative would also be considered.

Four physical alignment variations are being considered, including:

- Variation A: Near Palmdale, the freeway/expressway would dip slightly south of the main alignment, approximately between 15th Street East and Littlerock Wash.
- Variation B: East of the county line, the freeway/expressway would flare out slightly south of the main alignment between Oasis Road and Coughlin Road. Variation B1 would be at the same location, but it would flare out a little less and pass through the Krey airfield.
- Variation D: Near the community of Lake Los Angeles, the freeway/expressway would dip slightly south of the main alignment, just south of Avenue R approximately between 180th Street East and 230th Street East.
- Variation E: Near Adelanto and Victorville, the freeway/expressway would dip south of the federal prison.

Freeway/Tollway Alternative (Avenue P-8, I-15, and SR-18)

This alternative would follow the same physical alignment as the Freeway/Expressway Alternative (including Variations A, B, D, and E), but it would have a section between 100th

Street East and US 395 operate as a tollway. Details of this operating feature are being evaluated as part of an ongoing P3 analysis. The incorporation of green energy technologies and a bike path would also be considered.

Freeway/Expressway Alternative with High-Speed Rail (HSR) Feeder/Connector Service

This alternative would be the same as the Freeway/Expressway Alternative except that it would also include an HSR Feeder/Connector Service between the cities of Palmdale and Victorville. The HSR Feeder/Connector Service would utilize proven steel wheel-on-steel track technology and have a design speed of 180 miles per hour (mph) with an operating speed of 160 mph. Additional details of this operating feature, including the type of train technology (i.e., electric versus diesel-electric), its location in relation to the HDC (median-running alignment), and its connections to existing and proposed rail stations, are being evaluated as part of an ongoing Rail Alternatives Analysis. The incorporation of green energy technologies and a bike path would also be considered.

Freeway/Tollway Alternative with HSR Feeder/Connector Service

This alternative would be the same as the Freeway/Expressway Alternative except that it would also include an HSR Feeder/Connector Service between the cities of Palmdale and Victorville. The incorporation of green energy technologies and a bike path would also be considered.

Figure 1-3 HDC Project Farmland and Variations Map

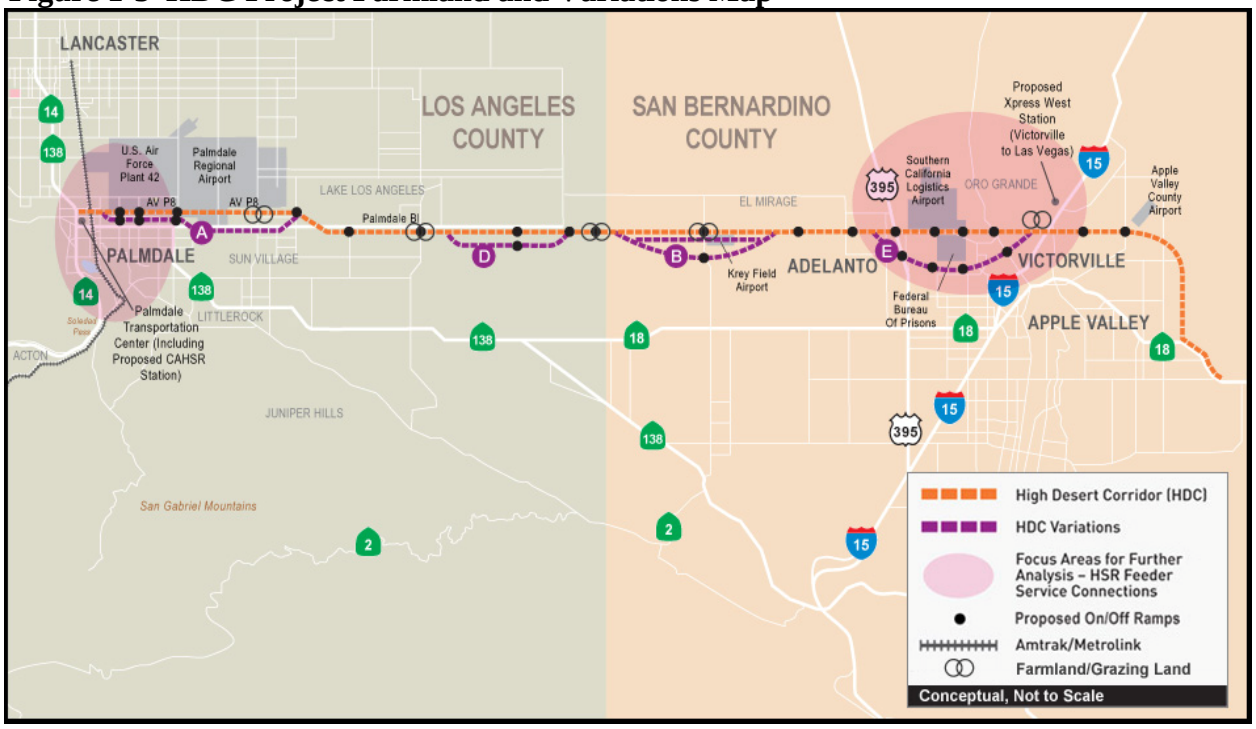


Figure 1-4 HDC Project Typical Section of Freeway/Expressway Alterntaive

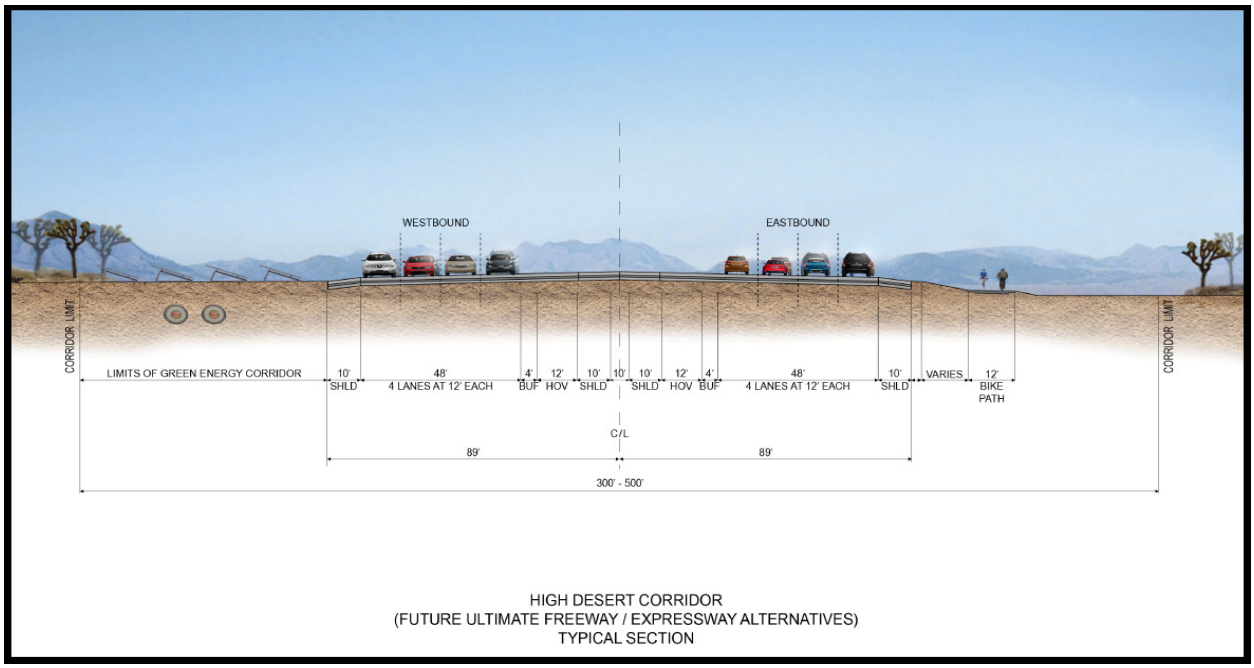
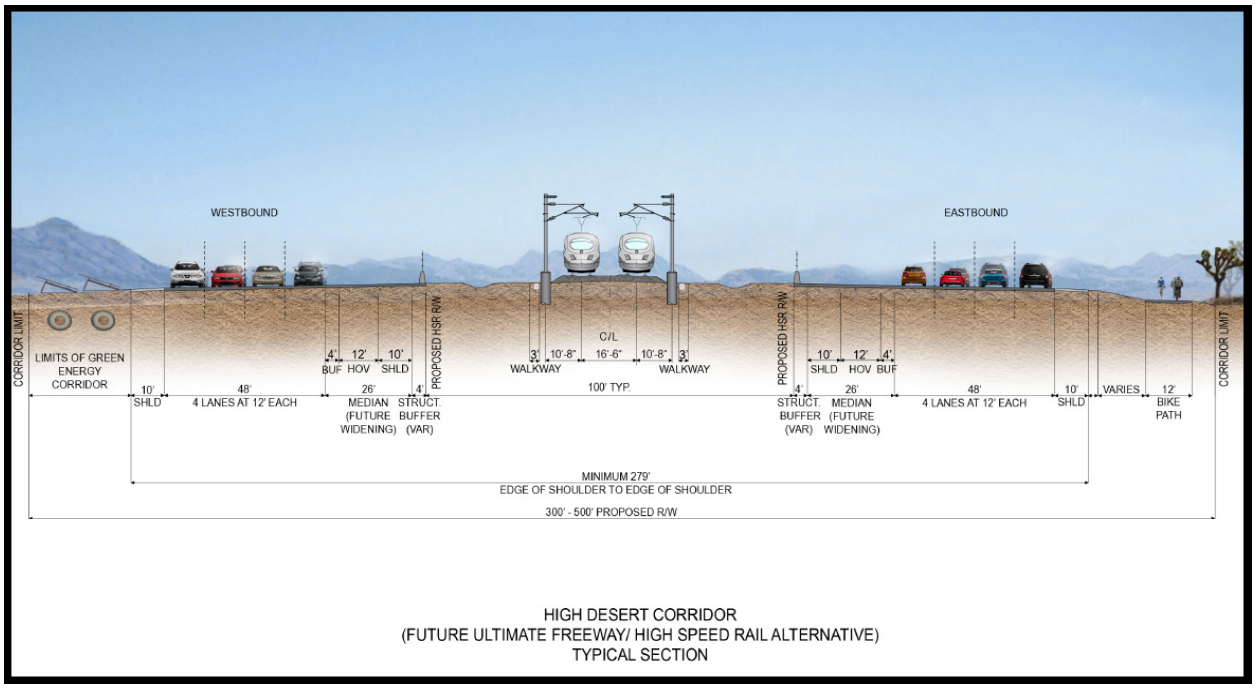


Figure 1-4 HDC Project Typical Section of Freeway/High Speed Rail Alterntaive



2. Regulatory Setting

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) (7 U.S.C. 4201-4209. and its regulations, 7 *Code of the Federal Regulations* [CFR] Part 658) require federal agencies, such as the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), to coordinate with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) if their activities may irreversibly convert farmland (i.e., directly or indirectly) to nonagricultural use. For purposes of the FPPA, farmland includes prime farmland, unique farmland, and land of statewide or local importance. The FPPA applies to projects and programs sponsored or financed in whole or in part by the federal government.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the review of projects that would convert Williamson Act contract land to nonagricultural uses. The main purposes of the Williamson Act are to preserve agricultural land and to encourage open space preservation and efficient urban growth. The Williamson Act provides incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to discourage the early conversion of agricultural and open space lands to other uses.

The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 (43 U.S.C. 315) established grazing districts and created the Department of Interior's Division of Grazing. This division later became the U.S. Grazing Service and, in 1946, the Grazing Service was merged with the General Land Office to become the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Taylor Grazing Act was intended to manage public grazing lands by preventing overgrazing and soil deterioration and to provide for their orderly use, improvement, and development. The Taylor Grazing Act was pre-empted by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), which was passed to establish policy for managing BLM-administered public lands. FLPMA authorized 10-year grazing permits. The Act also directed grazing advisory boards to guide BLM in developing allotment management plans.

California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (California Government Code S.51200-51295) commonly known as the Williamson Act, provides a tax incentive for the voluntary enrollment of agricultural and open space lands in contracts between local government and landowners. The contract restricts the land to agricultural and open space uses and compatible uses defined in state law and local ordinances. Local government establishes an agricultural preserve defining the boundary within which a city or county will enter into contracts with landowners. Williamson Act contracts are for 10 years and longer. The contract renews automatically each year, maintaining a constant, 10-year contract, unless the landowner or local government files to initiate nonrenewal. Should that occur, the Williamson Act would terminate 9 years after the filing of a notice of nonrenewal. Only a landowner can petition for a contract cancellation.

Tentative contract cancellations can be approved only after a local government approves, but the landowner pays the cancellation fee.

Local governments calculate the property tax assessment based on the actual land use instead of the potential land value assuming full development. California has the following policies regarding public acquisition of and locating public improvements on lands in agricultural preserves and on lands under Williamson Act contracts (Government Code §51290–51295):

- State policy is to avoid locating federal, state, or local public improvements and improvements of public utilities, and the acquisition of land, in agricultural preserves.
- State policy is to locate public improvements that are in agricultural preserves on land other than land under Williamson Act contract.
- State policy is that any agency or entity proposing to locate such an improvement, in considering the relative costs of parcels of land and the development of improvements, give consideration to the value to the public of land, particularly prime agricultural land, in an agricultural preserve.

Since 1998, another option in the Williamson Act Program is a Farmland Security Zone (FSZ) contract. An FSZ is an area created within an agricultural preserve by a board of supervisors upon the request of a landowner or group of landowners. FSZ contracts offer landowners greater property tax reductions and have a minimum initial term of 20 years. Like Williamson Act contracts, FSZ contracts renew annually unless an owner files a notice of nonrenewal.

Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) is the only statewide land use inventory conducted on a regular basis. The California Department of Conservation (DOC) administers the FMMP, under which it maintains an automated map and database system to record changes in agricultural land use. Important Farmland under the FMMP is listed by categories and defined according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) land inventory and monitoring criteria, as modified for California:

- **Prime Farmland** – Prime Farmland is land with the best combination of physical and chemical features to sustain long-term agricultural crop production. These lands have the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply necessary to produce sustained high yields. Soil must meet the physical and chemical criteria determined by the NCRS. Prime Farmland must have been used for production of irrigated crops at some time during the 4 years prior to the FMMP's mapping date.
- **Farmland of Statewide Importance** – Farmland of Statewide Importance is similar to Prime Farmland but with minor differences, such as having greater slopes or soils with a lesser ability to store moisture. Farmland of Statewide Importance must have been used for production of irrigated crops at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.

- **Unique Farmland** – Unique Farmland has lesser quality soils than Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. Unique Farmland is used for producing the state's leading agricultural crops. These lands usually are irrigated, but may include non-irrigated orchards or vineyards found in some climatic zones. Unique Farmland must have been used for crops at some time during the 4 years prior to the mapping date.
- **Farmland of Local Importance** – Farmland of Local Importance is farmland that is important to the local agricultural community as determined by each county's board of supervisors and local advisory committees.

California Farmland Conservancy Program Act (Public Resources Code Sections 10200 to 10277) and the California Farmland Conservancy Program provide a mechanism for DOC to establish agricultural conservation easements on farmland. Agricultural conservation easement, or easement, means an interest in land, less than fee simple, which represents the right to prevent the development or improvement of the land for any purpose other than agricultural production. The easement is granted for the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) by the owner of a fee simple interest in land to a local government, nonprofit organization, resource conservation district, or to a regional park or open-space district or regional park or open-space authority that has the conservation of farmland among its stated purposes or as expressed in the entity's locally adopted policies. It shall be granted in perpetuity as the equivalent of covenants running with the land. The landowner may make a request to the DOC that the easement be reviewed for possible termination 25 or more years from the date of sale of the agricultural conservation easement. CFCP seeks to encourage the long-term, private stewardship of agricultural lands through the voluntary use of agricultural conservation easements.

Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Act of 2002 designated the Wildlife Conservation Board as the lead state agency for carrying out the California Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program. The purpose of the program is to protect California's rangeland, grazing land and grassland through the use of conservation easements. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 10332, the purpose of the program is to accomplish the following: 1) To prevent the conversion of rangeland, grazing land and grassland to nonagricultural uses; 2) To protect the long-term sustainability of livestock grazing; and 3) To ensure continued wildlife, water quality, watershed, and open-space benefits to the State of California from livestock grazing.

The California Urban Water Planning Act (California Water Code § 10610 et seq.) requires urban water suppliers to describe and evaluate sources of water supply, efficient uses of water, demand management measures, implementation strategy and schedule, and other relevant information and programs. This information is used by the water agencies to carry out their long term resource planning responsibilities. Urban Water Management Plans (UWMPs) are completed in accordance with the Urban Water Management Plan Act. These plans are updated every 5 years with current update dated 2010.

California's Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act, or Senate Bill (SB) 375, requires the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks through integrated transportation, land use, housing, and environmental planning.

SCAG adopted the 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). SCAG is authorized to undertake intergovernmental review for federal assistance and direct federal development pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 12,372. Pursuant to Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21087 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15206 and 15125(b), SCAG reviews projects of regional significance for consistency with regional plans.

The most comprehensive land use planning for the HDC region is provided by city and county general plans, which local governments are required by State law to prepare as a guide for future development. City and county general plans within the HDC Project study area calls for the protection of farmland and open space, preserving native vegetation to the extent possible, and minimizing hydromodification among other policies. A table listing HDC Project consistency with relevant general plan policies is included in the HDC Project Draft Community Impacts Assessment (May 2014). The following is a sample of a farmland policy and a consistency finding:

***Preliminary Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan* (March 2011)**
Policy COS 6.2 requires design standards that would minimize potential conflicts with adjacent agricultural uses.
Consistent. The HDC Project includes design standards such as BMPs for storm water and dust control and contract provisions to minimize spread of invasive species to minimize conflicts with agricultural uses to the extent feasible.

2.1 Methods for Evaluating Impacts

The methods for evaluating HDC Project impacts include reviewing available FMMP spatial data for Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties (2010) to identify Important Farmland (i.e., Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Local Importance) and Grazing Land. The county assessor's office and DOC provided spatial data for agricultural lands protected under Williamson Act and FSZ contracts. LandVision™ from Digital Map Products, a land acquisition software solution, provided parcel's land use designation. Together with online maps and site visits, this information provided the basis for calculating land use changes.

Antelope Valley Conservancy (i.e., land trust) provided information about agricultural conservation easements. DOC staff provided a sample of an Interagency Agreement with the California High Speed Rail Authority and a copy of a Stipulated Judgment (with an agreement), dated April 18, 2013, related to the County of Madera, et al, vs. California High Speed Rail

Authority lawsuit. Both documents are related to the loss of important farmlands and mitigation measures.

To evaluate alternative-specific direct impacts and conversion of Important Farmland to nonagricultural use, the acreage for the HDC Project Right-of-way (ROW) requirement for the Freeway/Expressway Alternative main alignment, Variation B, and HSR Alternative was quantified and identified as being permanently converted to nonagricultural use.

In addition, analysts examined farmland severance on a parcel-by-parcel basis where severance would create two parcels, and result in remainder parcel(s) that would be too small to be farmed economically. The full details of the ROW requirement and amount/percentage of Important Farmland impact is summarized in ***Table 1 and 2*** and described in the ***Environmental Consequences*** discussion.

In accordance with FPPA criteria, NRCS staff and HDC Project analysts evaluated farmland conversion impacts on agricultural land and resources through completion of Form NRCS-CPA-106. NRCS completed the land evaluation portion of Form NRCS-CPA-106, considering the extent of converted farmland (as defined by the FPPA). The Relative value of farmland (land evaluation) to be converted has a scale of 0 to 100 Points. HDC Project analysts prepared the site assessment by using FPPA criteria (e.g., area of nonurban use, percentage of the HDC corridor being farmed, protected farmland, size of farm, creation of nonfarmable farmland, availability of farm support services, on-farm investments, and compatibility with existing agricultural uses). The site assessment portion has a total maximum score of 160 Points.

HDC Project staff combined the scores for both the land evaluation and site assessment portions of Form NRCS-CPA-106 to arrive at a total score for each HDC Project alternative. The maximum combined possible score is 260 points. If the score is less than 160 points, no further evaluation is necessary under the FPPA. Since the score calculated is 180 for the HDC Project, the FPPA requires consideration of alternatives or measures that would avoid or minimize farmland impacts – discussed in ***Avoidance and Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***.

Methods for Evaluating Effects Under NEPA

Pursuant to NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), HDC Project effects are evaluated based on the criteria of context and intensity. Context means the affected environment in which a proposed project occurs. Intensity refers to the severity of the effect, which is examined in terms of the type, quality, and sensitivity of the resource involved, location and extent of the effect, duration of the effect (short- or long-term), and other consideration of context. Beneficial effects are identified and described. When there is no measurable effect, impact is found not to occur. Intensity of adverse effects is summarized as the degree or magnitude of a potential adverse effect where the adverse effect is thus determined to be negligible, moderate, or substantial. It is possible that a significant adverse effect may still exist when on balance the impact is negligible or even beneficial. For agricultural lands, the terms are defined as follows:

- **A negligible impact** would be an impact that would not be measurable by FMMP, which uses a minimum land use mapping unit of 10 acres.
- **A substantial impact** would be a large conversion of agricultural land resources. Agricultural lands are not replaceable, and therefore any farmland conversion is a permanent depletion of the resource. Within the context of the Victor and Antelope valleys farmland in the HDC Project area, a large depletion is defined as more than 50 acres.
- **A moderate impact** would be a depletion of agricultural land that is measurable by FMMP (i.e., greater than 10 acres) but not a substantial impact (i.e., less than 50 acres).

CEQA Significance Criteria

According to CEQA guidelines Appendix G, the HDC Project could result in a potential significant impact on agricultural lands if it would result in any of the following:

- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance, as shown on the maps prepared for FMMP, to a nonagricultural use.
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.
- Involve other changes in the existing environment that would result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use because of their location or nature.

Impacts to grazing land were evaluated based on impacts to known BLM or U.S. Forest Service grazing individual allotments and the total grazing impacts and its percentage of total designated grazing land in each county. Grazing Land is an agricultural classification under FMMP, but it is not an “important farmland”. Neither Caltrans nor local jurisdictions have an established “significance thresholds” for impacts to grazing land.

Due to lack of established thresholds, the Santa Barbara County Cattlemen's Association threshold for impacts to grazing land [defined as the “displacement or division of land capable of sustaining between 25 to 30 animal units per year” *(Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual, 2008)*] was utilized as a general guidance and an acceptable threshold reference. This threshold reflects an operationally viable grazing unit, which size will depend on site conditions and grazing land carrying capacity.

Cattle foraging habitat and pastures could range from 2 acres up to 100 acres or more per Animal Unit Month (AUM). An AUM is calculated as the amount of forage cattle consumes in a month. Cattle set the standard at 1000 pounds of forage per month and sheep are calculated to consume approximately 200 pounds of forage per month. Therefore, there are five sheep per AUM. Displacement of grazing land with capacity to sustain 25 cows or 125 sheep could indicate significant impacts.

3. Affected Environment

This section describes state and regional farmland statistics and provides general information about farmland and agricultural operations within the HDC Project vicinity. Site visits were conducted in the summer of 2011 and through spring of 2012 to survey farming activities and to investigate farmland operations. Images taken during the site visits are included as Attachment 1 of the Farmland Report. The study area for effects on agricultural lands encompasses 500-foot wide area of disturbance associated with the HDC Project construction footprint (for direct effects) within a 0.5 mile buffer for evaluating community impacts. This area includes "100 feet" around the construction footprint accounting for federal standards for evaluating livestock noise impacts. The construction footprint includes the proposed HDC Project ROW and associated facilities. Parcels that the HDC Project alignments could sever were evaluated as part of this analysis.

3.1 Agriculture Statistics

In 2011, the state produced more than 400 types of agricultural products with a sales value of $43.5 billion, up from $38.0 billion in 2010 – a 15 percent increase. The state produces half of U.S.-grown fruits, nuts, and vegetables with several crops produced solely in California. A total of 81,500 farms operated in California representing 3.7 percent of the national total and 11.6 percent of cash farm receipts of the national total. Over 24 percent of California farms produced commodity sales totaling over $100,000, compared to 18 percent for the U.S. California lands devoted to farming and ranching totaled 25.4 million acres, unchanged from 2010. The California average farm size was 312 acres, while the U.S. average farm size was 420 acres.

Based on 2008 estimates prepared by the DOC, there are approximately 2.65 million acres of agricultural lands in the Southern California Association of Governments **(**SCAG) region – approximately 1.17 million acres of farmland and 1.48 million acres of rangeland. Based on the 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture, Los Angeles County had 1,734 farms totaling 108,463 acres (average of 63 acres) in 2007 in comparison with 1,543 farms totaling 111,458 acres (average of 72 acres) in 2002. San Bernardino County had 1,405 farms totaling 514,234 acres (average of 366 acres) in 2007 in comparison with 1,386 farms totaling 513,642 acres (average of 371 acres) in 2002.

According to the most recent Census of Agriculture profile information in California (USDA, California Agricultural Statistics Review 2012-2013), out of 58 counties, Los Angeles County ranked at number 32 and San Bernardino County ranked at number 23 with a gross value of approximately $173 and $519 million. Leading commodities for Los Angeles County included wooden ornamentals, vegetable and Alfalfa, where as leading commodities for San Bernardino County were milk, chicken, and Cattle.

3.2 Land Use

Along the portion of the HDC within and near Palmdale there is a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial land uses with a concentration of farmland. Towards the middle area of the HDC and within areas of the unincorporated Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, most of land is undeveloped and vacant. Land use within the portions of the HDC near and within Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley primarily includes low-density residential and industrial developments.

Thirty parcels had been identified as farmland or grazing land (***Table 1 and 2***). These parcels were grouped into 4 segments based on their location and proximity to each other. ***Table 1 and 2*** show farmland Assessor's Parcel Numbers, land use designation, ownership, size, and estimated ROW impact for the HDC Project build alternatives main alignment.

Segment 1: Starting from Palmdale and heading east, the HDC Project passes through uncultivated grazing land in the vicinity of Littlerock Wash (from 85th Street to 95th Street). This Segment includes 15 parcels with signs of previous farming patterns, but has no active farming. The total area of these 15 parcels is 496 acres.

All parcels in this Segment, except three, are designated as grazing land and owned by the City of Los Angeles (Los Angeles Word Airports). The remaining three parcels are designated as other or grazing land according to the California Department of Conservation's FMMP. In addition, these three parcels are designated as Vacant or Agricultural by LandVision™.

The general vicinity of this segment had been referenced in a research study (SERG 2001). The research study performed tilling and irrigation to restore an abandoned farmland site with native vegetation to control dust generation and improve air quality.

Segment 2: Further to the east between Big Rock Wash and 180th Street, the HDC Project passes through eleven parcels of Important Farmland. Farming is active in this Segment. Few parcels did not show sign of active farming during field site visits. The total area of these eleven parcels is 470 acres.

Segment 3: Further to the east, between 235th Street and 255th Street, the HDC Project passes through three parcels, all designated as Important Farmland. The total area of these three parcels is 720 acres. This segment is contiguous to a number of farmlands with a combined area of approximately 2000 acres.

Segment 4 (previously Meadowbrook Dairy Farm): Further to the east, near Sheep Creek Road and Parkdale Road, the HDC Project passes through one property that used be a dairy farm and previously owned by Meadowbrook Dairy Farm. This is the only farmland property in the HDC Project located in San Bernardino County and includes areas designated as Unique Farmland.

Table 1: Impacted Farmland Parcels and Land Use Designation

ID	APN	FMMP Land Use Status	Signs of Uncultivated Farmland	RW Impacts	Property Owner	LandVision™
Segment 1 (85th-95th St.)						
1	3028-013-281	Other	Inactive/Furrows*	Partial	City of LA	Public
2	3028-018-001	Other	Inactive/Furrows*	Partial	Kang Lin Trust	Agricultural
3	3028-017-001	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows*	Partial	Lawrence Moss	Agricultural
4	3028-017-003	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows*	Partial	Moss Trust	Vacant Land
5	3028-019-275	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Full	City of LA	Public
6	3028-019-271	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Partial	City of LA	Public
7	3028-019-278	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Full	City of LA	Public
8	3028-019-290	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Partial	City of LA	Public
9	3028-019-283	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Full	City of LA	Public
10	3028-019-282	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Partial	City of LA	Public
11	3028-019-284	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Full	City of LA	Public
12	3028-019-285	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Partial	City of LA	Public
13	3028-019-287	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Partial	City of LA	Public
14	3028-019-288	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Full	City of LA	Public
15	3028-019-274	Grazing Land	Inactive/Furrows	Partial	City of LA	Public
Segment 2 (150th-180th St.)						
16	3029-016-002	Prime Farmland	Not Applicable	Partial	Balzer Trust	Vacant Land
17	3029-016-025	Prime Farmland	Inactive	Partial	Ebenkamp Tr.	SFR
18	3029-016-026	Prime Farmland	Inactive	Partial	Ebenkamp Tr.	Vacant Land
19	3029-016-007	Prime Farmland	Inactive	Partial	Ebenkamp Tr.	Agriculture
20	3075-007-001	Unique Farmland	Not Applicable	Bisected	Long Valley Rd	SFR
21	3075-007-010	Unique Farmland	Not Applicable	Full	Long Valley Rd	Agricultural
22	3075-007-002	Unique Farmland	Not Applicable	Partial	Long Valley Rd	Vacant Land
23	3075-007-003	Unique Farmland	Not Applicable	Partial	Long Valley Rd	Vacant Land
24	3075-007-008	Prime Farmland	Inactive	Partial	Ted & Chryl I.	Vacant Land
25	3075-007-007	Prime Farmland	Not Applicable	Bisected	Chang Trust	Triplex
26	3075-011-017	Statewide Import.	Not Applicable	Partial	Bolthhouse	Vacant Land
Segment 3 (235th-240th St.)						
27	3091-021-018	Prime Farmland	Not Applicable	Bisected	Bolthhouse	SFR
28	3091-020-020	Prime Farmland	Not Applicable	Partial	Bolthhouse	Vacant Land
29	3091-020-019	Prime Farmland	Not Applicable	Partial	Bolthhouse	Vacant Land
Segment 4 (Sheep Creek Rd.)						
30	045716110-0000	Unique Farmland	Not Applicable	Bisected	Phelan Piñon	Dairy Farm

***Parcels ID 1, 2, 3, and 4 could be related to a study completed in 2001 to control dust from disturbed desert habitats involving tilling and irrigation to restore native vegetation (SERG 2001).**

FMMP: California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program.

Table 2: Farmland Parcels Affected; Assessor Parcel Number (APN) and Right-of-Way Impact (Acres) of Farmland *

ID	APN	Variation	Location	Parcel Size	R/W Impact	% Impact
1	3028-013-281	Main Alignment	85th-90th St.	307.0	48	15.6%
2	3028-018-001	Main Alignment	85th-90th St.	80.0	12.5	15.6%
3	3028-017-001	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	40.0	10.0	25.0%
4	3028-017-003	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	20.0	1.0	5.0%
5	3028-019-275	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	2.5	Full Impact
6	3028-019-271	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	10.0	4.0	40.0%
7	3028-019-278	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	5.0	5.0	Full Impact
8	3028-019-290	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	1.2	48.0%
9	3028-019-283	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	2.5	Full Impact
10	3028-019-282	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	1.8	72.0%
11	3028-019-284	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	2.5	Full Impact
12	3028-019-285	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	0.6	24.0%
13	3028-019-287	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.5	1.2	48.0%
14	3028-019-288	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	2.1	2.1	Full Impact
15	3028-019-274	Main Alignment	90th-95th St.	14.3	1.1	7.7%
Total				**495.9**	**96.0**	
16	3029-016-002	Main Alignment	150th-155th St.	80.0	20.0	25.0%
17	3029-016-025	Main Alignment	155th-160th St.	20.0	2.0	10.0%
18	3029-016-026	Main Alignment	155th-160th St.	20.0	2.5	12.0%
19	3029-016-007	Main Alignment	155th-160th St.	20.0	2.5	12.0%
20	3075-007-001	Main Alignment	160th-165th St.	80.0	14.8	19.4%
21	3075-007-010	Main Alignment	160th-165th St.	10.0	10.0	Full Impact
22	3075-007-002	Main Alignment	160th-165th St.	10.0	1.2	12.0%
23	3075-007-003	Main Alignment	160th-165th St.	10.0	1.2	12.0%
24	3075-007-008	Main Alignment	160th-165th St.	20.0	2.0	10.0%
25	3075-007-007	Main Alignment	165th-170th St.	160.0	56.3	35.2%
26	3075-011-017	Main Alignment	175th-180th St.	40.0	11.5	28.8%
Total				**470.0**	**124.0**	
27	3091-021-018	Main Alignment	240th-250th St.	640.0	79.6	12.4%
28	3091-020-020	Main Alignment	235th-240th St.	40.0	12.8	32.0%
29	3091-020-019	Main Alignment	235th-240th St.	40.0	19.0	47.5%
Total				**720.0**	**111.4**	
30	0457-16-110-0000	Main Alignment	Sheep Creek Rd.	**157.6**	**57.5**	**36.5%**

Total R/W Impact	**388.9 Acres**
Impacted Properties Total Acreage	**1,843.5 Acres**
Prime, Statewide, or Unique R/W Impact	**252.4 Acres**

Actual parcel size and impact may change or vary subject to HDC Project's alignment changes or corrections to parcel's information based on real estate title reports and right-of-way negotiation process.

The Phelan Piñon Hills Community Services District acquired Meadowbrook Dairy Farm on December 28, 2012 and the farm currently is not in operation. The District is considering subdividing the property and constructing a solar energy facility at the northeast corner near Sheep Creek and Bartlett. The District has been selling and dismantling the Dairy Farm fixtures, but a manure digester could remain on the property. The property includes three groundwater production wells, two located on the northwest and northeast corner of the property and the 3rd in the middle of the property.

3.3 Important and Protected Farmlands

The 2010 FMMP data (***Table 3 and 4***) indicates 39,812 acres of Important Farmland in Los Angeles County and 22,761 acres in San Bernardino County. The majority of Important Farmland in Los Angeles County is concentrated in the Antelope Valley north of Palmdale and West of Lancaster in close proximity to the California Aqueduct. A small area of Important Farmland is located along Route 126 near Santa Clara River and west of I-5 near Castaic Creek.

In San Bernardino County, Important Farmland is located along the Mojave River near and along Route 66 from Victorville heading north to Hinkley Valley/Barstow and further east near Newberry Springs. Other Important Farmland is located near Chino and along Santa Ana River near Redlands. Outside Urban and Built-up Land (i.e., incorporated and unincorporated communities), the majority of San Bernardino County surveyed area is classified as grazing land with a total of 902,590 acres. The HDC Project, for most of its 35 miles in San Bernardino County, runs through grazing land.

Between 2008 and 2010, both counties suffered from a net loss of Important Farmland at approximately 5.5% for Los Angeles County and 11.3% for San Bernardino County. ***Table 3 and 4*** indicate that the net acreage for each land use category had changed. During this period, population growth and the associated urban development pressure drove the loss of Important Farmland; however, losses also can occur if land goes into habitat conservation or confined animal facilities. Gains in Important Farmland can also occur, for example, when grazing land goes into crop production.

Approximately 23,000 acres of Important Farmland is located within a 10-mile radius from the HDC Project alignment. This amounts to about a third of the 62,573 acres of Important Farmland mapped in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties.

No properties under consideration for the HDC Project right-of-way acquisition are under a Williamson Act contract (agricultural preserve) based on Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties assessor offices. Most of the Important Farmland within the HDC Project footprint is classified as vacant or residential.

Table 3. Los Angeles County Farmland Change by Land Use						
			2008-10 ACREAGE CHANGES			
	TOTAL ACREAGE		ACRES	ACRES	TOTAL	NET
LAND USE CATEGORY	INVENTORIED		LOST	GAINED	ACREAGE	ACREAGE
	2008	2010	(-)	(+)	CHANGED	CHANGED
Prime Farmland	32,406	30,876	2,422	892	3,314	-1,530
Farmland of Statewide Importance	1,228	952	286	10	296	-276
Unique Farmland	1,177	1,129	101	53	154	-48
Farmland of Local Importance	7,193	6,855	412	74	486	-338
IMPORTANT FARMLAND SUBTOTAL	42,004	39,812	3,221	1,029	4,250	-2,192
Grazing Land	229,474	231,475	1,048	3,049	4,097	2,001
AGRICULTURAL LAND SUBTOTAL	271,478	271,287	4,269	4,078	8,347	-191
Urban and Built-up Land	170,864	174,888	270	4,294	4,564	4,024
Other Land	678,251	674,568	4,550	867	5,417	-3,683
Water Area	3,468	3,318	150	0	150	-150
TOTAL AREA INVENTORIED	1,124,061	1,124,061	9,239	9,239	18,478	0

Table 4. San Bernardino County Farmland Change by Land Use						
			2008-10 ACREAGE CHANGES			
	TOTAL ACREAGE		ACRES	ACRES	TOTAL	NET
LAND USE CATEGORY	INVENTORIED		LOST	GAINED	ACREAGE	ACREAGE
	2008	2010	(-)	(+)	CHANGED	CHANGED
Prime Farmland	14,090	12,848	1,652	410	2,062	-1,242
Farmland of Statewide Importance	6,747	6,242	546	41	587	-505
Unique Farmland	2,661	2,511	263	113	376	-150
Farmland of Local Importance	1,828	1,160	668	0	668	-668
IMPORTANT FARMLAND SUBTOTAL	25,326	22,761	3,129	564	3,693	-2,565
Grazing Land	901,666	902,590	2,121	3,045	5,166	924
AGRICULTURAL LAND SUBTOTAL	926,992	925,351	5,250	3,609	8,859	-1,641
Urban and Built-up Land	275,695	277,875	473	2,653	3,126	2,180
Other Land	246,413	245,813	1,796	1,196	2,992	-600
Water Area	449	510	0	61	61	61
TOTAL AREA INVENTORIED	1,449,549	1,449,549	7,519	7,519	15,038	0

3.4 Grazing Areas

The Stoddard Valley ephemeral sheep allotment was designated in the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan of 1980. This allotment is comprised of three separate grazing units: West Stoddard, Middle Stoddard, and East Stoddard. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) issued a 10-year lease authorizing livestock grazing on the Stoddard Mountain Allotment (Middle Unit) located in rural San Bernardino County near Victorville. This allotment is bordered by I-15 on the east, National Trails Highway on the west, City of Victorville on the south, and the community of Lenwood on the north.

Under the West Mojave Plan of 2006, which amended the CDCA, sheep grazing area within the Middle Stoddard unit was reduced but remained available within non-critical desert tortoise habitat and outside of the Mojave Monkeyflower Conservation Area. The current available grazing area in the Middle Stoddard unit is 16,899 acres.

3.5 Water Management and Supplies

Important Farmland relies on water management to provide adequate and dependable water supply often found adjacent to natural surface water and aquifers or near manmade channels and reservoirs. The following section is based on the *Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency Urban Water Management Plan 2010* and *Palmdale Water District Strategic Water Resources Plan (Final Program EIR 2012)*:

Groundwater is an important component of water supply in the Antelope Valley. Estimates of average natural annual groundwater recharge range from about 40,000 to 58,000 acre-foot (AF). Pumping in the valley, primarily for agricultural purposes, peaked in the 1950s when production may have exceeded 400,000 AF annually. Increased urban growth in the 1980s resulted in an increase in the demand for water and an increase in groundwater use. Long-term groundwater withdrawals have caused some land subsidence. Severe groundwater overdraft has occurred in portions of the region, including Antelope and Victor Valleys in the South Lahontan Basin. Implementation of the SWP in the 1970s resulted in stabilization of groundwater levels in some areas of the Antelope Valley, though groundwater levels in general have continued to fall. From the 1990s to present, agricultural uses have significantly increased groundwater production and exacerbated the drop in groundwater levels across the basin. In 1999, agricultural interests filed litigation seeking to determine rights to groundwater. In September 2010, as part of the ongoing adjudication proceedings, Judge Jack Komar determined that the “safe yield” of the basin is 110,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) and that the basin has been in a state of overdraft for over 50 years.

Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency (AVEK) is a wholesale supplier of imported water from the State Water Project (SWP) for the Antelope Valley region. AVEK attempts to maximize use of its surface water product by encouraging retail purveyors to utilize surface water instead of pumped groundwater whenever possible and utilize groundwater recharge as a method for banking water during wet years.

Projected water supply from the SWP during a normal year is 87,668 AF (2015-2030) and that represents 62% of the maximum SWP allocation. Demand is expected to grow from 60,675 AF in 2010 to 96,558 AF in 2030 (this accounts for water losses but not groundwater banking). Current and planned supply is 113,120 AF in 2010 and 107,688 AF in 2030 which takes into consideration groundwater banking.

4. Environmental Consequences

The following section describes direct and indirect impacts to agricultural lands that are associated with the HDC Project build alternatives, focusing on the Freeway/Expressway Alternative, Freeway/Expressway with High-Speed Rail (HSR) Feeder/Connector Service Alternative, and Variation B of the build alternatives.

The No-Build Alternative has no direct impacts to farmland or agricultural resources that could be attributed to the HDC and thus will not be analyzed further. Variation A, D, or E effects to farmland are the same as the Freeway/Expressway Alternative main alignment and thus will not be analyzed further. Each of the build alternatives with Variation B has a minor net reduction of farmland take and is analyzed and discussed further. The Freeway/Tollway Alternative has no additional impacts to farmland different than the HDC main alignment and thus will not be analyzed further. The Freeway/Expressway Alternative with High Speed Rail Feeder Service and has additional impacts to grazing land near Victorville and will be analyzed further. The Freeway/Tollway Alternative with High Speed Rail Feeder Service has the same impacts as the Freeway/Expressway Alternative with High Speed Rail Feeder Service and thus will not be analyzed further.

The HDC Project objectives include improvement to regional connectivity, good movement, and land use accessibility and thus will likely contribute to regional economic development. However, the HDC Project will have significant impacts to farmland because it will have direct and indirect short and long term and cumulative impacts to farmland and farming operations in the region. The extent of impacts can be described as significant under CEQA and substantial under NEPA.

As previously discussed, thirty parcels had been identified as farmland within the HDC Project footprint and were grouped into 4 segments listed and described in ***Table 1 and 2.***

4.1 Direct Environmental Consequences

The HDC Project will directly impact farmland by converting approximately 252 acres of Important Farmland and about 2,760 acres of Grazing Land to nonagricultural use. This farmland and grazing lands will be acquired for the new transportation facility right-of-way.

Thirty farmland parcels will be impacted. The extent of right-of-way impact for each individual parcel ranges from 0.6 acre to 79.6 acres. Eighteen parcels are impacted by partial or full impact of 5 acres or less. The remaining twelve parcels are impacted by 10 acres or more of partial or full impact, including one parcel impacted at approximately 79.6 acres from 640 acres. None of the parcels affected by the HDC Project is under a Williamson Act contracts.

Out of these thirty parcels, four parcels will be severed and possibly rendering the remainder or some of these parcels as economically unprofitable for productive agriculture production, including one nursery. In addition, farmland irrigation in some of these parcels might be impacted requiring circular irrigation patterns to be modified to parallel lines.

The HDC Project build alternatives' main alignment pass through approximately 215 acres of designated grazing land in Los Angeles County and 2,360 acres in San Bernardino County. Most of the HDC Project build alternatives 35 miles in San Bernardino County (outside Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley) run through FMMP classified "grazing land". The HDC Project impacts to grazing land were not considered significant due to abundant availability of grazing land. The HDC Project contribution to the incremental loss of grazing land was not considered a potentially significant impact.

The High Speed Rail alignment departures near Victorville to the north from the HDC Project alignment at a point about 1 mile west from I-15, and passes through a designated sheep grazing area in the Stoddard Valley ephemeral sheep allotment (Middle unit). The impact to the sheep grazing area is estimated at about 650 acres, which include 250 acres required for the new tracks and station right-of-way. The remainder 400 acres is an area locked between the proposed rail tracks and the I-15.

With the HDC Project build alternatives that include the High-Speed Rail, the remaining acreage available for grazing at the Stoddard Valley ephemeral sheep allotment (Middle unit) will be reduced to 16,249 acres – a reduction by about 4%. An average of one band of sheep per year (i.e., 500 to 1000 ewe-lamb pairs with average size of 800 ewe-lamp pairs) is anticipated to graze when sheep grazing is authorized this allotment, which amounts to about 160 AUM. The carrying capacity could be estimated by dividing 16,899 acres by 160 AUM, which amounts to about 105 acres per "5 ewe-lamb pairs". A reduction of 650 acres of available acreage could potentially reduce the sheep number down by about 30 ewe-lamb pairs (i.e., 6 AUM).

The HDC Project impacts to designated grazing land is not significant, which amounts to about 0.1% of grazing land in Los Angeles County and about 0.3% in San Bernardino. Since impact to Middle Stoddard unit is below 25 AUM, grazing impact is considered insignificant for that particular grazing allotment unit.

East of Lancaster and near the Palmdale Regional Airport, the HDC Project passes adjacent to approximately 15,000 acres of irrigated alfalfa and onion fields without any direct impacts.

Heading to the east, the HDC Project main alignment passes adjacent to and through four distinct Farmland Segments as described in the ***Affected Environment*** and ***Table 1 and 2***.

Segment 1 (Littlerock Wash to 95th Street): The HDC Project will impact a total of 96 acres out of 496 acres of grazing land from 15 parcels. No active farming operation will be impacted. No parcels will be severed.

Segment 2 (Big Rock Wash to 180th Street): The HDC Project will impact a total of 124 acres of Important Farmland out of 470 acres from 11 parcels. One nursery operation comprised of contiguous four parcels (ID #20, 21, 22, and 23) will be impacted. In addition, two parcels (ID # 20 and 25) will be severed. The remaining severed properties will likely to continue to be farmed, but the nursery operation could be significantly impacted with parcels located on both side of the proposed HDC Project alignment. Due to unknown impacts to local circulation patterns and how it could affect access between bisected properties for Segment 2, farmland owners along either side of the HDC near 165th Street might be advised to consider the purchase of each other's property to consolidate properties along the same side of the HDC. This might be beneficial to improve farmland management and connectivity.

Segment 3 (235th Street to 255th Street): The HDC Project will impact a total of 111.4 acres of Important Farmland out of 720 acres from 3 parcels. All three parcels title is hold by the same owner and are actively farmed. The HDC Project will bisect the largest of the three parcels, potentially impacting the remainder of the parcel due to its current circular irrigation patterns, which may have to be modified to parallel lines. Although right-of-way impact is substantial, the impacts could be lessened if the owner purchases and farm adjacent vacant properties on either side of his properties.

Segment 4 (El Mirage Road intersection with Sheep Creek Road): The HDC Project main alignment require the acquisition of about 57.5 acres and bisect the recently acquired Meadowbrook dairy farm property into two parcels (70 acres and 30 acres out of 158 acres). Within the 57.5 acres proposed acquisition area is about 17 acres of unique farmland. The severed and remaining two parcels include another 57 acres of unique farmland. Variation B of the HDC Project alignment shifts the alignment to the south and bypasses and avoids bisecting this parcel.

Table 5 below summarizes the HDC Project direct impacts to Important Farmland (prime, statewide importance, unique or local importance farmland) in Los Angele and San Bernardino counties.

Table 5: Important Farmland Impacts (FMMP 2010)			
County	**Total Mapped Farmland**	**HDC Project Direct Impact**	**Percentage %**
Los Angeles	39,812 acres	235 acres	0.63
San Bernardino	22,761 acres	17 Acres	0.08

4.2 Indirect Environmental Consequences

Growth-related and accumulative impacts could occur and vary in its geographical reach. Indirect growth impacts could occur due to improved access and desirability of land adjacent to HDC Project alignment and interchanges and its subsequent impacts to open space and natural resources and infrastructures. Future growth could include an increase of residential development within 5-mile radius and an increase of industrial and commercial development within 2-mile radius of new interchanges and access points along the HDC Project alignment. In addition, near the proposed XpressWest High Speed Rail new rail station in Victorville and the transit station improvements in Palmdale, high-density/mixed-use development is likely to occur within 0.25-mile radius.

Due to improved access and return of investment of developing farmland, farmland could be converted to a higher-value residential and commercial land use. Smaller size farmland properties are at higher risk of conversion because they are more affordable to purchase and may require a simpler process for obtaining environmental clearances and permits. Based on SB 375 and adopted RTP/SCS, future growth is projected to be sustainable and context-sensitive (i.e., directed toward protecting open space and agricultural resources). Future conversion of farmland to nonagricultural urban land uses is subject to CEQA process and to the appropriate county and local jurisdiction zoning ordinances and their planning department's review and permitting processes.

Urbanized area encroachment affects agricultural operations indirectly, by constraining activities such as spraying fertilizers and pesticides or reducing operating hours for farm equipment. Where residential development is adjacent to farms, residents complain of odor and noise from agricultural equipment.

Operation of the proposed HDC corridor could result in an increase in impervious surface areas, which could potentially increase storm water runoff to adjacent properties and impact farmland. Furthermore, potential pollutant sources associated with operation of the proposed HDC Project include motor vehicles, highway maintenance, illegal dumping, and landscaping care.

4.3 Short-term Construction Impacts

Short-term construction impacts are attributed to construction activities and traffic detours impacting local circulation network and access and affecting mobility and safety of farm produce, supplies, and workers. Construction activities may also disrupt utilities and utility lines. Utility disruptions could jeopardize farm productivity and place some farmland at risk for conversion to nonagricultural use.

Uncontrolled dust and storm water could impact adjacent farmland properties near active construction sites. A hydrological and water quality construction impact would occur if construction activities related to the preferred alternative substantially affected surface water or groundwater quality or altered surface runoff rates, thereby contributing to flooding or erosion hazards.

5. Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Adequate compensation will be provided for property acquisitions, including relocation assistance for residents and businesses as required by the law. Caltrans' Right-of-Way (ROW) agents will work with affected property owners to address issues of concern and negotiate a compensation of their property's fair market value and any temporary loss of production due to the project.

Variation D was originally designed to dip slightly south of the main alignment between 150th Street East and 230th Street East, but was later shifted to between 180th Street East and 230th Street East to minimize impacts to farmland. This modification reduced the net impact by about 58 acres of prime farmland and avoided severing one farmland parcel diagonally.

The following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures are proposed to address potential impacts to farm and grazing land resources:

AG-1 Design and implement the HDC Project in a manner that avoids and minimizes Right-of-Way (ROW) requirement impacts, as follows:

- The HDC will be aligned to follow property lines, wherever possible.
- If feasible, utility relocations shall occur within the ROW acquired for the proposed highway rather than on farmland adjacent to the highway.
- In cases where farming is unlikely to continue, the small remainder parcels are to be identified as a farmland conversion, and Caltrans will acquire these property remainders and offer them to adjacent farmland property owners.

- Farmland owners along either side of the HDC near 165th Street shall be advised to consider the purchase of each other's property to consolidate properties along the same side of the HDC.

AG-2 Caltrans will enter into an agreement with the DOC California Farmland Conservancy Program to preserve farmland by placing long-term farmland protection tools on Important Farmland or cause the conversion of Grazing Land into Important Farmland. Caltrans will fund the California Farmland Conservancy Program's work to identify suitable agricultural land for mitigation of impacts to farmland and to fund the purchase of agricultural conservation easements from willing sellers. The performance standards for this measure are to preserve Important Farmland in an amount commensurate with the quantity and quality of the converted farmlands, within the same agricultural regions as the impacts occur, at a replacement ratio of not less than 2:1.

Caltrans and the California Farmland Conservancy Program will develop selection criteria to guide the pursuit and purchase of conservation easements. These will include, but are not limited to, provisions to ensure that the easements will conform to the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 10252 and to prioritize the acquisition of willing seller easements on lands that are adjacent to other protected agricultural lands or that would support the establishment of greenbelts and urban separators.

AG-3 Impacts to about 2,965 acres of Grazing Land will be mitigated by placing a conservation easement over open space at a replacement ratio of not less than 1:1 in areas where it could meet multiple natural resource conservation objectives including, but not limited to, wetland protection, wildlife habitat conservation, and scenic open-space preservation.

AG-4 Caltrans will fund a research project targeting farmland restoration and reclamation and soil removal and storage.

AG-5 Within a 100-foot buffer area from future property lines with farmland, disturbed surface areas will be stabilized utilizing native vegetation and soils clear of invasive plant species. Soil amendments, if used, must comply with the requirements in the California Food and Agricultural Codes. Soil amendment must not contain paint, petroleum products, pesticides or any other chemical residues harmful to animal life or plant growth. The construction contract will include provisions to protect against the spread of invasive species.

AG-6 Infill material to be used in the project shall not be obtained from borrow sites comprised of prime farmland. When selecting sites for wetland mitigation or infiltration basins, the HDC Project will avoid prime farmland to the extent possible. To the extent feasible, infiltration basin sites will also serve wetland mitigation and borrow material purposes to reduce impacts to prime farmland and improve farmland conservation efforts.

References

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3) United States Department of Agriculture – Census of Agriculture (2007). Available online and accessed 09-5-2013. http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/index.php
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11) California Planning & Development Report. Available online and accessed 08-10-2012. http://www.cp-dr.com/node/1665
12) County of Madera, et al, vs. High Speed Rail Authority Stipulated Judgment. Available online and accessed 09-05-2013. http://www.saccourt.ca.gov/general/media/docs/Madera-v-High-Speed-Rail-Stipulated-Judgment.pdf
13) The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act, 2010 Status Report. Available online and accessed 09-05-2013. http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/lca/stats_reports/Pages/Index.aspx

Attachment 1: Photographs of the High Desert Corridor Study Area

1. View Along Palmdale Blvd.

2. Farmland near Palmdale

3. Automated circular Irrigation

4. Inactive irrigation structures

5. Meadowbrook Dairy - 2012

6. Nursery - 2012

Attachment 2: Copy of NRCS Form CPA-106 and Letter

United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service
44811 N Date Avenue Ste. G
Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 945-2604 X 108
(661) 942-5503

May 7th, 2013

Mr. Samer Momani
Caltrans District 7 - Division of Environmental Planning
100 S. Main Street, #100, MS-16A
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Momani:

Attached you will find the completed Form NRCS-CPA-106 (Farmland Conversion Impact Rating) for the project named "High Desert Corridor".

Thank you for your cooperation in protecting the farmland resources. If you have any questions, please contact me at (661) 945-2604 x 108.

Sincerely,

Paul Nguyen

Paul Nguyen
Soil Conservationist

Attach.

Helping People Help the Land
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Natural Resources Conservation Service

NRCS-CPA-106
(Rev. 1-91)

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING FOR CORRIDOR TYPE PROJECTS

PART I *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	3. Date of Land Evaluation Request 4/4/13	4. Sheet 1 of 1
1. Name of Project **High Desert Corridor Project**	5. Federal Agency Involved **Caltrans Acting for FHWA(23 USC 327)**	
2. Type of Project **Transportation: Freeway/Expressway/Rail**	6. County and State **Los Angeles and San Bernardino, CA**	
PART II *(To be completed by NRCS)*	1. Date Request Received by NRCS 4/5/13	2. Person Completing Form Paul Nguyen
3. Does the corridor contain prime, unique statewide or local important farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - Do not complete additional parts of this form). YES ☑ NO ☐	4. Acres Irrigated 29,710	Average Farm Size 63
5. Major Crop(s) **Carrot, Onion, Alfalfa**	6. Farmable Land in Government Jurisdiction Acres: 49,158 % 1.9	7. Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 43,631 %
8. Name Of Land Evaluation System Used **CA Revised Storie Index**	9. Name of Local Site Assessment System **None**	10. Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 5/7/13

PART III *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*	Alternative Corridor For Segment			
	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly	337	0	0	291
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly, Or To Receive Services	0	0	0	0
C. Total Acres In Corridor	337	0	0	291
PART IV *(To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information*				
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland	209.8			
B. Total Acres Statewide And Local Important Farmland	12			
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted	0.48			
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value	Data Not	Available		
PART V *(To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information Criterion Relative value of Farmland to Be Serviced or Converted (Scale of 0 - 100 Points)*	83			

PART VI *(To be completed by Federal Agency) Corridor Assessment Criteria (These criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5(c))*	Maximum Points	Corridor A	Corridor B	Corridor C	Corridor D
1. Area in Nonurban Use	15	14	N/A	N/A	14
2. Perimeter in Nonurban Use	10	9	N/A	N/A	9
3. Percent Of Corridor Being Farmed	20	18	N/A	N/A	18
4. Protection Provided By State And Local Government	20	0	N/A	N/A	0
5. Size of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average	10	8	N/A	N/A	8
6. Creation Of Nonfarmable Farmland	25	10			10
7. Availability Of Farm Support Services	5	5	N/A	N/A	5
8. On-Farm Investments	20	18	N/A	N/A	18
9. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services	25	10	N/A	N/A	10
10. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use	10	5	N/A	N/A	5
TOTAL CORRIDOR ASSESSMENT POINTS	160	97	0	0	97
PART VII *(To be completed by Federal Agency)*					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)	100	83	0	0	0
Total Corridor Assessment (From Part VI above or a local site assessment)	160	97	0	0	97
TOTAL POINTS *(Total of above 2 lines)*	260	180	0	0	97

1. Corridor Selected:	2. Total Acres of Farmlands to be Converted by Project:	3. Date Of Selection:	4. Was A Local Site Assessment Used?
			YES ☐ NO ☑

5. Reason For Selection:

Signature of Person Completing this Part: | DATE

NOTE: Complete a form for each segment with more than one Alternate Corridor