

### **3.1.4 Community Impacts**

The Caltrans Environmental Handbook Volume 4 Community Impact Assessment (Handbook) defines a community as “a population rooted in one place, where the daily life of each member involves contact with, and dependence on, other members.” The handbook indicates that physical barriers, such as highways, waterways, open spaces, activity centers, sharply different average home values, selected demographic characteristics, and resident perceptions, can delineate communities or neighborhoods. In addition, local planning agency maps and reports define community and neighborhood boundaries.

#### **3.1.4.1 Community Character and Cohesion**

##### ***Regulatory Setting***

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, established that the federal government use all practicable means to ensure that all Americans have safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings (42 U.S.C. 4331[b][2]). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in its implementation of NEPA (23 U.S.C. 109[h]), directs that final decisions regarding projects are to be made in the best overall public interest. This requires taking into account adverse environmental impacts, such as destruction or disruption of human-made resources, community cohesion, and the availability of public facilities and services.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), an economic or social change by itself is not to be considered a significant effect on the environment. However, if a social or economic change is related to a physical change, then social or economic change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant. Since this project would result in physical change to the environment, it is appropriate to consider changes to community character and cohesion in assessing the significance of the project’s effects.

##### ***Affected Environment***

Information in the Draft Community Impact Assessment (CIA) for the project, completed in August 2014, is the basis of information provided in this section.

The project is situated within the counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino and traverses the communities of Palmdale, Lake Los Angeles (located within unincorporated Los Angeles County), unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County, Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley. Community character, population, and housing characteristics for the communities mentioned above will be discussed in this section.

##### ***Palmdale***

Palmdale can be delineated into two areas, with SR-14 serving as a dividing point between West and East Palmdale. The community of East Palmdale is bordered by SR-14 to the west and extends east towards 120<sup>th</sup> Street, while West Palmdale is bordered by SR-14 to the east and extends west towards 90<sup>th</sup> Street West. There are

several suburban neighborhoods within West Palmdale, including Anaverde, Belle Vista, and Rancho Vista West, while suburban neighborhoods within East Palmdale include The Vineyards, which is located in southeast Palmdale.

Several communities are identified within Palmdale’s general planning area sphere of influence, including Little Rock Wash, Community of Acton, and Community of Leona Valley. Two other established rural neighborhoods are located within the planning area; one is located south of Pearblossom Highway between 32<sup>nd</sup> Street East and Cheseboro Road and the other is located between Avenues M and O-12 and 10<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Street West. Based on the General Plan, Palmdale has noted its intent to remain consistent with the current land use designations currently set for the area.

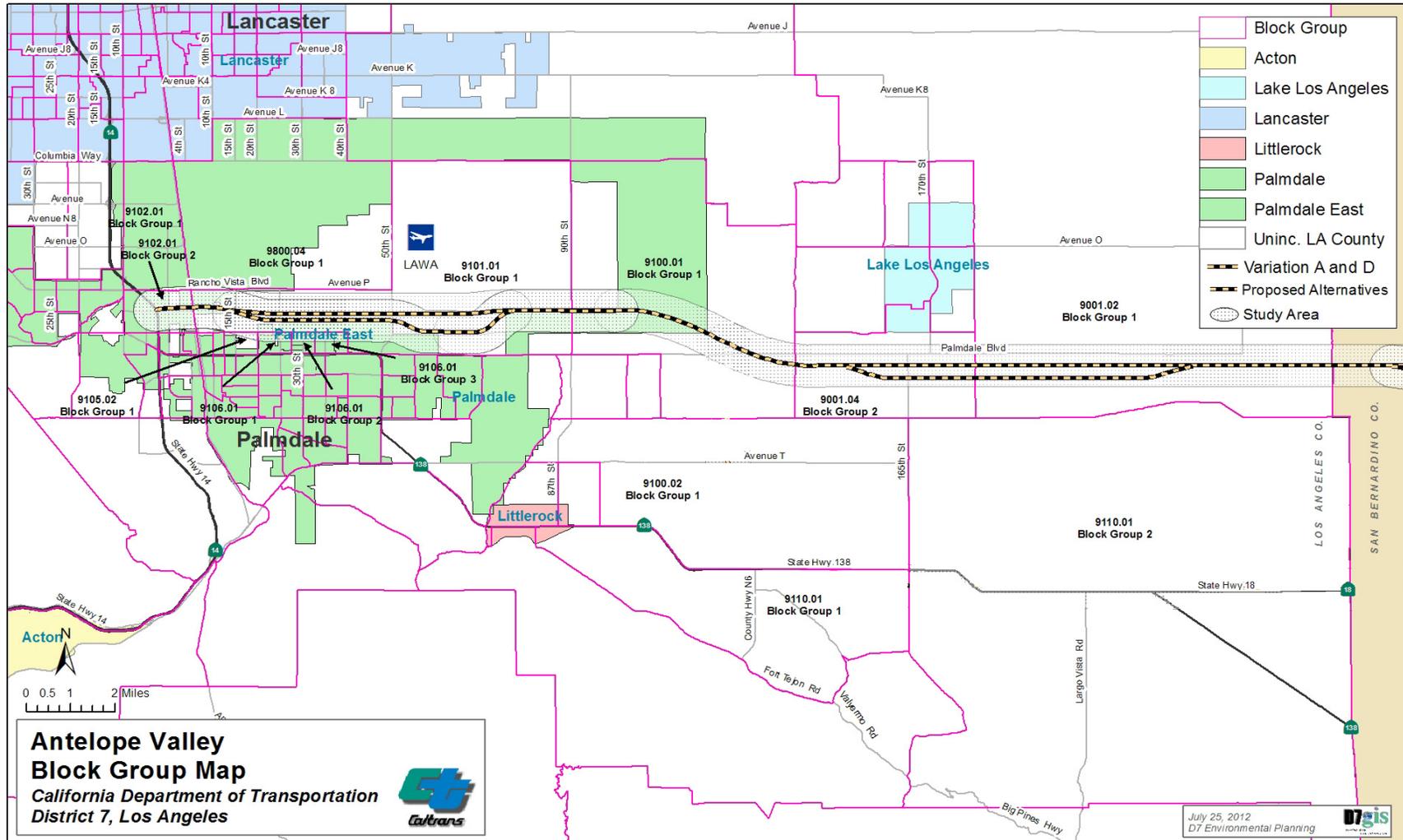
Also within the planning area are several unincorporated territories, which are surrounded by the city and are essentially “islands” under the jurisdiction of the County. Most of the islands were developed as single-family residential tracts. The tracts were developed in the 1950s and 60s under the County’s rural standards that did not require curbs, gutters, sidewalks, streetlights, and permitted septic tanks. Cost of rehabilitation of the tract areas has gradually increased with time. The City of Palmdale has plans for annexing the area, which includes 11 of the subdivisions, in an effort to improve conditions within these neighborhoods.

The following subsections describe the study area community and socioeconomic characteristics within Palmdale. Most data were obtained from the U.S. Census 2010 (unless otherwise indicated) at the block group level. When the data at the block group level are not available, the data at the census tract level are used. Six census tracts covering the project study area within Palmdale include Tracts 9102.01, 9101.01, 9100.01, 9800.04, 9105.02, and 9106.01. Table 3.4.1-1 lists the block groups and census tracts contained within the Palmdale study area. The block group map within the Palmdale study is also shown in Figure 3.1.4-1

**Table 3.1.4-1 Palmdale Study Area Block Groups (2010 U.S. Census)**

Block Groups within the Palmdale Study Area	
9102.01 Block Group 2	9800.04 Block Group 1
9105.02 Block Group 1	9106.01 Block Group 1
9106.01 Block Group 2	9106.01 Block Group 3
9101.01 Block Group 1	9100.01 Block Group 1
9102.01 Block Group 1	

Figure 3.1.4-1 Census Block Group within Palmdale Study Area



Population and Age

Table 3.1.4.-2 summarizes race and ethnic composition of population within the Palmdale study area compared with the city of Palmdale and Los Angeles County.

**Table 3.1.4-2 Race and Ethnic Composition of Population in Palmdale (2010 U.S. Census)**

Category	Palmdale Study Area	Palmdale	Los Angeles County
2000 Total Population	11,367	116,670	9,519,331
2010 Total Population	16,482	152,750	9,818,605
Net Change	(+) 5,115	(+) 36,080	(+) 299,274
Population Growth Rate (2000-2010)	45%	31%	3.1%
Average Annual Growth Rate	4.5%	3.1%	0.3%
2010 Median Age	29.0	29.8	34.8
19 Years and Under	38%	37%	28%
20 to 64 Years	54%	56%	62%
65 Years and Over	8%	7%	11%
<b>Ethnicity and Race</b>			
Hispanic*	63.4%	54.4%	47.7%
White	20.9%	24.5%	27.8%
Asian*	2.01%	4.1%	13.5%
Black *	11.2%	14.1%	8.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native *	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander *	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Some Other Race	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%
Two or More Races	1.6%	2.2%	2.0%
Total Minority	77.3%	73%	69.9%
**"Minority individuals" as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality.			

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population within the Palmdale study area is approximately 16,482, which is roughly about 11 percent of the total population of Palmdale, and is within the median age range of 29, similar to the city of Palmdale. The population growth rate within the study area is about 4.5 percent, which is slightly higher compared to Palmdale’s average annual growth rate of 3.1 percent. Distribution of population within Palmdale is dispersed throughout the city; however, population densities are highest in areas south of the study area in which the proposed project alignment avoids bisecting concentrated communities.

Ethnicity and Race

The ethnic composition within Palmdale is shown in Table 3.1.4-2 and is similar to SCAG’s regional population characteristics. When compared to Los Angeles County,

Palmdale has a higher percentage of Hispanic population. For the Non-Hispanic Black population, Palmdale displays a higher percentage than the county. Palmdale has a lower percentage of Non-Hispanic White populations and Non-Hispanic Asians, while it has a slightly higher percentage of Individuals classified as Non-Hispanic American Indians and of “Non-Hispanic All Other” population compared to the county.

The Hispanic population is the majority and accounts for 63.4 percent of the population within the Palmdale study area for this project. When compared to Palmdale, there is a higher percentage of Hispanic population within the study area. The Non-Hispanic Asian population accounts for 2 percent of the population within the study area, which is slightly lower than Palmdale. Similarly, the Non-Hispanic Black population is lower compared to Palmdale, while it is unchanged for Non-Hispanic American Indians. For “Non-Hispanic All Others,” there is a decrease in population within the study area compared to Palmdale.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has established definitions for NEPA analysis, in which “minority individuals” are defined as members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black; or Hispanic. For the study area, the total minority population is approximately 77.3 percent (11,791), as shown in Table 3.1.4-2.

Income

The income level and poverty status of the population within the Palmdale study area compared with the city of Palmdale and Los Angeles County are presented in Table 3.1.4-3. Information regarding income levels was not available from the 2010 U.S. Census at the block group level for the Palmdale study area. As a result, income information at the census tract level was obtained from the 2010 American Community Survey (ACS).

**Table 3.1.4-3 Palmdale Income Levels (2010 U.S. Census)**

Category	Palmdale Study Area	Palmdale	Los Angeles County
Median Household Income Level	\$35,299	\$61,076	\$55,811
Total Population (Persons)	20,767	152,750	9,818,605
Percentage of Population Determined as Poverty Status	29.1	19.4	17.5
Poverty Status (%) - Under 18 Years	51.4	40.9	34.1
Poverty Status (%) - 18 to 64 Years	45.7	55.1	57.8
Poverty Status (%) - 65 Years and Over	2.7	3.9	7.9

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

As defined by the U.S. Census, poverty status includes individuals who fall below certain monetary threshold levels, which vary by family size and composition. For

example, a family of three would be considered at poverty if the annual household income is less than \$14,374. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are approximately 29,163 persons within Palmdale who are considered of poverty status. Approximately 19.4 percent of the total population within the city is under the poverty threshold level. As shown in Table 3.1.4-3, Palmdale has a lower percentage of persons within the poverty level compared to the county as a whole. More notable is the higher percentage in poverty levels for individuals under the age of 18.

The median household income level within the study area census tracts ranges from \$20,686 up to \$70,077 per household, with an overall median household income level of \$35,299. In comparison to the Los Angeles County median household income level of \$55,811, the study area exhibits a lower average household income level.

Within the project study area, there are approximately 6,033 persons considered to have a low-income status, which constitutes about 29 percent of the total population within the study area. The highest percentage was among individuals under 18 years of age, followed by individuals within the age group of 18 and 64. The lowest proportion classified as poverty status was among individuals at age 65 and above.

### Community Cohesion

Table 3.1.4-4 summarizes the stability index within the study area compared with the city of Palmdale. About 80 percent of the total housing units within the study area are owner occupied compared with 70 percent in Palmdale. Single-family homes, which are classified as 1-unit detached structures, make up about 64 percent of the total housing units in the study area compared with 79 percent in Palmdale. Within the study area, households whose members have lived within the same housing unit prior to the year 2000 consist of about 33 percent of the total households compared with 39 percent in Palmdale. Although the percentage of owner-occupied housing units and single-family homes is relatively high within Palmdale, the number of long-term residents who lived within their current households for 10 years or less is relatively low.

**Table 3.1.4-4 Palmdale Stability Index**

Indicators	Palmdale	Palmdale Study Area
Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	70.2	80.2
Percent of Single-Family Homes	79	63.9
Percent of Household Members in Same Housing Unit (Prior to Year 2000)	33.4	39

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014

### Housing

Housing demographics within the study area compared with the city of Palmdale and Los Angeles County are presented in the CIA. The owner-occupied housing in the study area accounts for about 58 percent compared to 68 percent in Palmdale and 48 percent in Los Angeles County. An average home value in the study area is

\$209,218, compared to \$277,700 and \$508,800 in Palmdale and Los Angeles County as a whole, respectively. The average household size within the study area is 3.6 persons.

Figure 3.1.4-2 shows the distribution of housing units within the Antelope Valley area, which indicates that most of the population within Palmdale is located in the southern part of the project study area, more specifically south of Palmdale Boulevard.

### *Unincorporated Los Angeles County*

Unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County of the study area within the Antelope Valley are under the jurisdiction of the County. Two communities are located within unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County within the project area, including Lake Los Angeles and Sun Village.

**Lake Los Angeles.** Lake Los Angeles is located within the eastern portion of the Antelope Valley and is approximately 17 miles east of Downtown Palmdale. Similar to other areas within the Antelope Valley, Lake Los Angeles is characterized by low-density development with an open and rural setting. Lake Los Angeles' rural town center is located along Avenue O between 167<sup>th</sup> Street East and 172<sup>nd</sup> Street East, and along 170<sup>th</sup> Street East between Avenue O and Glenfall Avenue. The rural town center provides various services and employment opportunities, such as the Lake Los Angeles Library, Saddleback Market, the Living Springs Foursquare Church, and the Saddleback True Value Hardware, for its residents. Residents of Lake Los Angeles wish to maintain the existing rural character of their community.

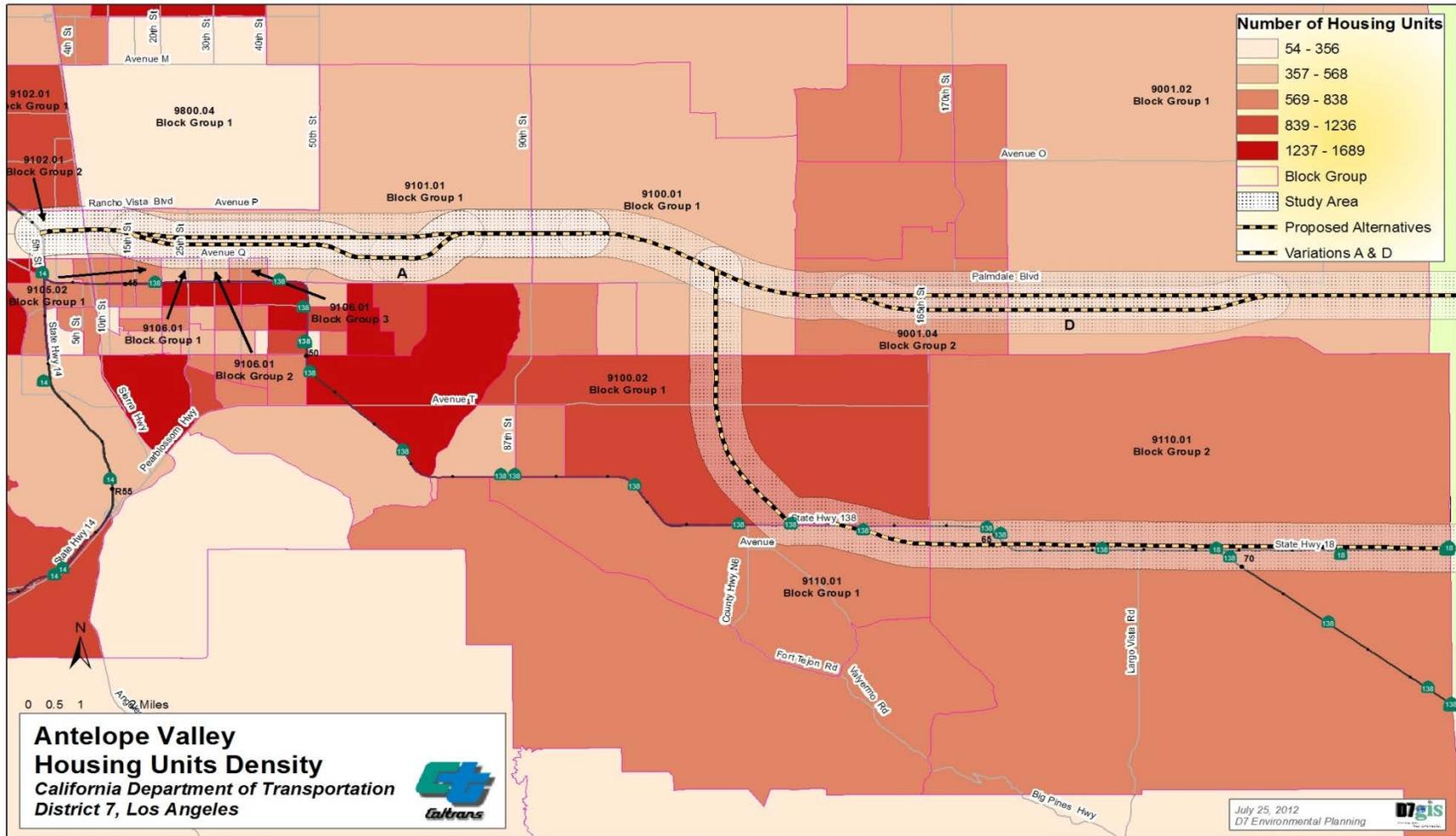
**Sun Village.** Sun Village is located within the southeastern portion of the Antelope Valley, approximately 8 miles east of Palmdale City Hall. A large portion of the community is either developed or partially developed and provides a wide range of use, including commercial and retail services to local employment opportunities. The remaining areas within the community are largely undeveloped and lacking appropriate infrastructure. Sun Village's rural town center area is located along Palmdale Boulevard between Little Rock Wash and 95<sup>th</sup> Street East, and along 90<sup>th</sup> Street East between Palmdale Boulevard and Avenue Q-14. Jack Robinson Park, St. John Ame Church, and Intel Car Wash Consulting are within close proximity of the rural town center.

The following subsections describe the study area community and socioeconomic characteristics within the study area located in unincorporated Los Angeles County. Most data were obtained from the U.S. Census 2010 (unless otherwise indicated) at the block group level. When the data at the block group level are not available, the data at the census tract level are used.

Two census tracts covering the unincorporated Los Angeles County study area include Tracts 9001.04 and 9001.02. Two block groups covering the unincorporated Los Angeles County study area are as follows:

- 9001.04 Block Group 2
- 9001.02 Block Group 1

Figure 3.1.4-2 Antelope Valley Housing Density



Population and Age

Table 3.1.4.-5 summarizes race and ethnic composition of population within the unincorporated Los Angeles County study area compared with Los Angeles County. Note that the information for unincorporated Los Angeles County is not available.

**Table 3.1.4-5 Unincorporated Los Angeles County  
Study Area Population Demographics (U.S. Census 2010)**

Category	Unincorporated Los Angeles County Study Area	Los Angeles County
2000 Total Population	NA	9,519,331
2010 Total Population	1,970	9,818,605
Net Change	NA	(+) 299,274
Population Growth Rate (2000-2010)	NA	3.1%
Annual Average Growth Rate	NA	0.3%
2010 Median Age	36.3	34.8
19 Years and Under	36%	28%
20 to 64 Years	56%	62%
65 Years and Over	8%	11%
<b>Ethnicity and Race</b>		
Hispanic *	56.5%	47.7%
White	30.5%	27.8%
Asian *	0.3%	13.5%
Black *	9.6%	8.3%
American Indian and Alaska Native *	0.5%	0.2%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander *	0.1%	0.2%
Some Other Race	.05%	0.3%
Two or More Races	2.3%	2.0%
Total Minority	68.8%	69.9%
**"Minority individuals" as defined by the CEQ.		

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population within the unincorporated Los Angeles study area is approximately 1,970, which is roughly 0.02 percent of the total population of Los Angeles County. The median age of population within the unincorporated Los Angeles County study area, as of the 2010 U.S. Census, is 36.3.

Ethnicity and Race

For the study area, the Hispanic population is the majority ethnic group, accounting for 56.5 percent of the population, and is about 9 percent higher than compared to Los Angeles County as a whole, as shown in Table 3.1.4-5. Compared to Los Angeles County, the unincorporated area has a slightly higher level of Hispanic Black population and Non-Hispanic White populations, with a much smaller percentage of Non-Hispanic Asians.

The total minority population within the study area is approximately 68.8 percent, which is comparable to the county’s total minority percentage of approximately 69.9 percent.

**Income**

Census information for the average household income level and poverty status for unincorporated Los Angeles as of 2009 was not available; however, sectors that provided the highest paid salaries within unincorporated Los Angeles County include Information Technology (IT), Professional Management, Agriculture, Public Administration, Construction, and Wholesale, with average salary levels above \$50,000 per year. Sectors with the lowest paid average salaries include Leisure-Hospitality, Manufacturing, and Retail, with average salaries at or below \$32,000 per year.

The median household income level for the study area is \$54,995 per year and is similar to the Los Angeles County median household income of \$55,811 per year. 2010 U.S. Census information on income levels was not available at the block group level for the study area. Income information at the census tract level was obtained from the 2010 ACS.

Within the study area, there are approximately 1,885 individuals considered to be of low-income or poverty status, which constitutes about 25 percent of the total population within the study area. The highest percentage was individuals under 18 years of age, followed by individuals 18 to 64 years of age. The lowest percentage classified as of poverty status is individuals 65 years and above (refer to Table 3.1.4-6).

**Table 3.1.4-6 Unincorporated Los Angeles County Income Levels (U.S. Census 2010)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Unincorporated Los Angeles County Study Area</b>	<b>Unincorporated Los Angeles County</b>	<b>Los Angeles County</b>
Annual Median Household Income Level (\$)	\$54,995	N/A	\$55,811
Total Population (Persons)	7,540*	N/A	9,818,605
Percentage of Population Determined to be of Poverty Status	25	N/A	17
Poverty Status (%) - Under 18 Years	1,012	N/A	579,151
Poverty Status (%) - 18 to 64 Years	769	N/A	982,660
Poverty Status (%) - 65 Years and Over	104	N/A	135,654
*Data was not available at the block group level; therefore, income level information from Census tracts 9001.04 and 9001.02 were used to estimate income levels for the study area.			

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014

### Community Cohesion

As shown in Table 3.1.4-7, about 48 percent of the total housing units within Los Angeles County are owner occupied. Single-family homes, which are classified as single-unit detached structures, make up about 50 percent of the total housing units. Households who have lived within the same housing unit prior to the year 2000 consist of about 42 percent of the total households.

Within the study area, there is a greater percentage of owner-occupied housing units, households in the same housing unit prior to 2000, and percentage of single-family homes. Two of the three indicators for community cohesion are relatively high, which may indicate a high sense of community cohesion.

**Table 3.1.4-7 Los Angeles County Stability Index**

<b>Community Cohesion Indicators</b>	<b>Los Angeles County</b>	<b>Unincorporated Los Angeles County Study Area</b>
Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	48.2	73.5
Percent of Single-Family Homes	49.9	97.1
Percent of Households in Same Housing Unit (Prior to Year 2000)	41.9	45.6

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

### Housing

Housing demographics within the study area compared with unincorporated Los Angeles County and Los Angeles County are presented in the CIA. The owner-occupied housing in the study area accounts for about 68 percent compared to 64 percent in unincorporated Los Angeles County and 48 percent in Los Angeles County. An average home value in the study area is \$232,995, compared to \$277,700 and \$508,800 in Palmdale and Los Angeles County as a whole, respectively. The average household size within the study area is 3.2 persons.

### *San Bernardino County*

San Bernardino County is forecasted to experience substantial population growth in the coming decades. SCAG’s study of growth trends over the last few decades has shown a continued decentralization of population, in which growth has now shifted towards San Bernardino and Riverside counties.

The project traverses various areas of San Bernardino County, including unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County, Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley. Within the unincorporated areas of San Bernardino County, there appears to be a lack of defined community. Most of the communities and housing units are located within the developed areas of Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley.

The boundaries established for census tracts and block groups within San Bernardino County are not delineated by jurisdictional boundaries, but encompass multiple jurisdictions. As a result, classifying each block group by jurisdiction was not

possible, because many of the boundaries cross over into other jurisdictions. For the purpose of population and housing analysis for jurisdictions within San Bernardino County, block groups will be combined into a single project study area called the Victor Valley Study Area. Table 3.1.4-8 lists the block groups within the Victor Valley study area. They are also shown in Figure 3.1.4-3.

**Table 3.1.4-8 Victor Valley Study Area Block Groups**

Block Groups within the Victor Valley Study Area	
91.10 Block Group 2	97.14 Block Group 1
91.14 Block Group 1	99.05 Block Group 2
91.16 Block Group 4	117 Block Group 1
91.17 Block Group 2	121.01 Block Group 2
97.08 Block Group 1	121.04 Block Group 2
97.12 Block Group 2	97.13 Block Group 2
97.13 Block Group 1	91.17 Block Group 1
9802 Block Group 1	121.01 Block Group 3

### *Adelanto*

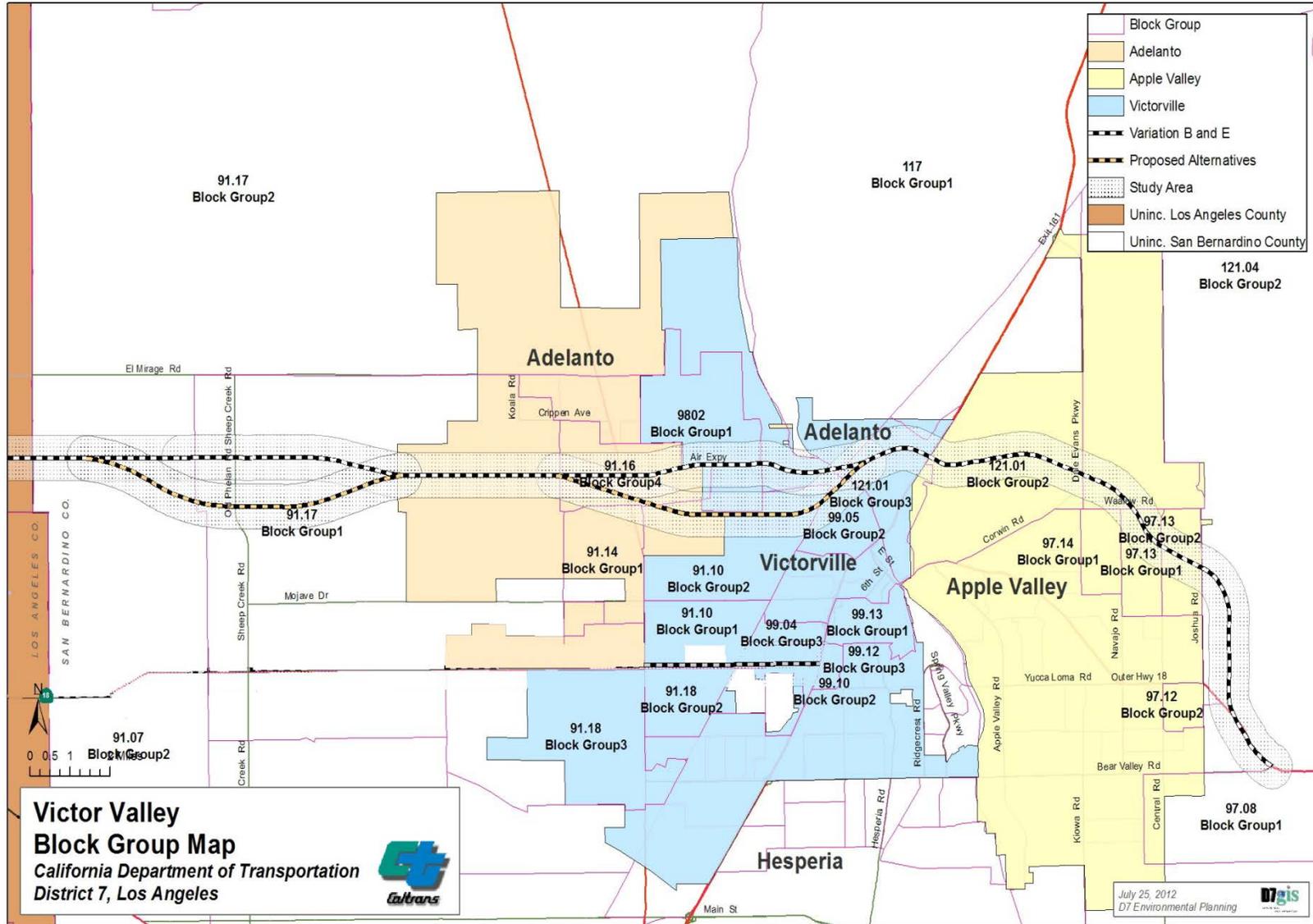
Adelanto’s planning area according to the *Adelanto General Plan* (May 1994) is approximately 81,000 acres in size and includes all lands contained within its city boundaries, sphere of influence, the former George Air Force Base (GAFB), and lands north of Shadow Mountain Road. There are two distinct residential communities within the city. The community located north of Air Expressway includes various community facilities, such as government buildings, community centers, parks, and schools, that serve as local hubs for community activities. The community south of Holly Road is served by several commercial developments located south and east of the community.

### Population and Age

Table 3.1.4-9 summarizes race and ethnic composition of population within the Victor Valley study area compared to the city of Adelanto and San Bernardino County.

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population within the study area is approximately 45,481 persons, which is approximately 1.5 times the total population in Adelanto, and has a median age of 37.5 years, which is higher than Adelanto’s median age by 9 years. The annual growth rate within the study area is 3.1 percent, lower than Adelanto’s overall growth rate of 7.5 percent. The distribution of population within Adelanto is concentrated north of SR-18 along Mojave Drive, in addition to areas south of El Mirage Road. The proposed project alignment is situated along Air Expressway, where the population density is less than those of other areas within the city.

Figure 3.1.4-3 Victor Valley Block Group Map



**Table 3.1.4-9 Race and Ethnic Composition of Population in Adelanto  
(2010 U.S. Census)**

Category	Victor Valley Study Area	Adelanto	San Bernardino County
2000 Total Population	34,602	18,130	1,709,434
2010 Total Population	45,481	31,765	2,035,210
Net Change	(+) 10,879	(+) 13,635	(+) 325,776
Population Growth Rate (2000-2010)	31.4%	75.2%	19.0%
Annual Average Growth Rate	3.1%	7.5%	1.9%
Total Population (Persons)	45,481	31,765	2,035,210
2010 Median Age (Years)	37.5	27.9	31.2
19 Years and Under	30.7%	41.1%	32.7%
20 to 64 Years	61%	47.6%	58.4%
65 Years and Over	8.3%	4.4%	8.9%
<b>Ethnicity and Race</b>			
Hispanic *	41%	58%	49%
White	37%	17%	33%
Asian *	4%	2%	6%
Black *	14%	20%	8%
American Indian and Alaska Native *	1%	0.3%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander *	0.4%	1%	0.3%
Some Other Race	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%
Two or More Races	3%	2%	2%
Total Minority	61%	80%	64%

\*"Minority individuals" as defined by CEQ.

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

### Ethnicity and Race

Table 3.1.4-9 provides a comparison of ethnicity and race for Adelanto, the study area, and San Bernardino County.

Adelanto has higher percentages of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Black populations than San Bernardino County. The percentages of Non-Hispanic White, Non-Hispanic Asian, and Non-Hispanic American Indian populations in Adelanto are lower than those of the county. The Non-Hispanic and Other Race Category population percentage is slightly higher for Adelanto compared to that of the county. The population percentage differences within ethnicity groups within Adelanto and the county are highest among the Non-Hispanic White and Non-Hispanic Black populations.

Within the Victor Valley study area, the Hispanic population accounts for 41 percent of the total population, which is lower compared to Adelanto. The Non-Hispanic White population percentage is higher in the study area than in Adelanto. Non-Hispanic Asians account for 4 percent of the population within the study area, which is slightly higher than that of Adelanto. The Non-Hispanic Black population

percentage is lower compared to that of Adelanto. For Non-Hispanic American Indians, the percentage is marginally higher in the study area. The total minority population in the study area is approximately 61 percent.

Income

2010 U.S. Census information on income levels was not available at the block group level for the Victor Valley study area; therefore, income information at the census tract level was obtained from the 2010 ACS.

The income and poverty status of the population within the Victor Valley study area compared with the city of Adelanto and San Bernardino County are presented in Table 3.1.4-10. There are approximately 16,867 persons considered to be of low-income or in poverty status within the Victor Valley study area or about 22 percent of the study area total population, as compared to 25.6 percent in Adelanto and 15 percent in San Bernardino County. The highest percentage was among individuals between the ages of 18 and 64, followed by individuals under age 18. Individuals 65 years and above comprise the lowest percentage of the study area population in poverty status.

**Table 3.1.4-10 Victor Valley Study Area Income Levels  
(2010 U.S. Census)**

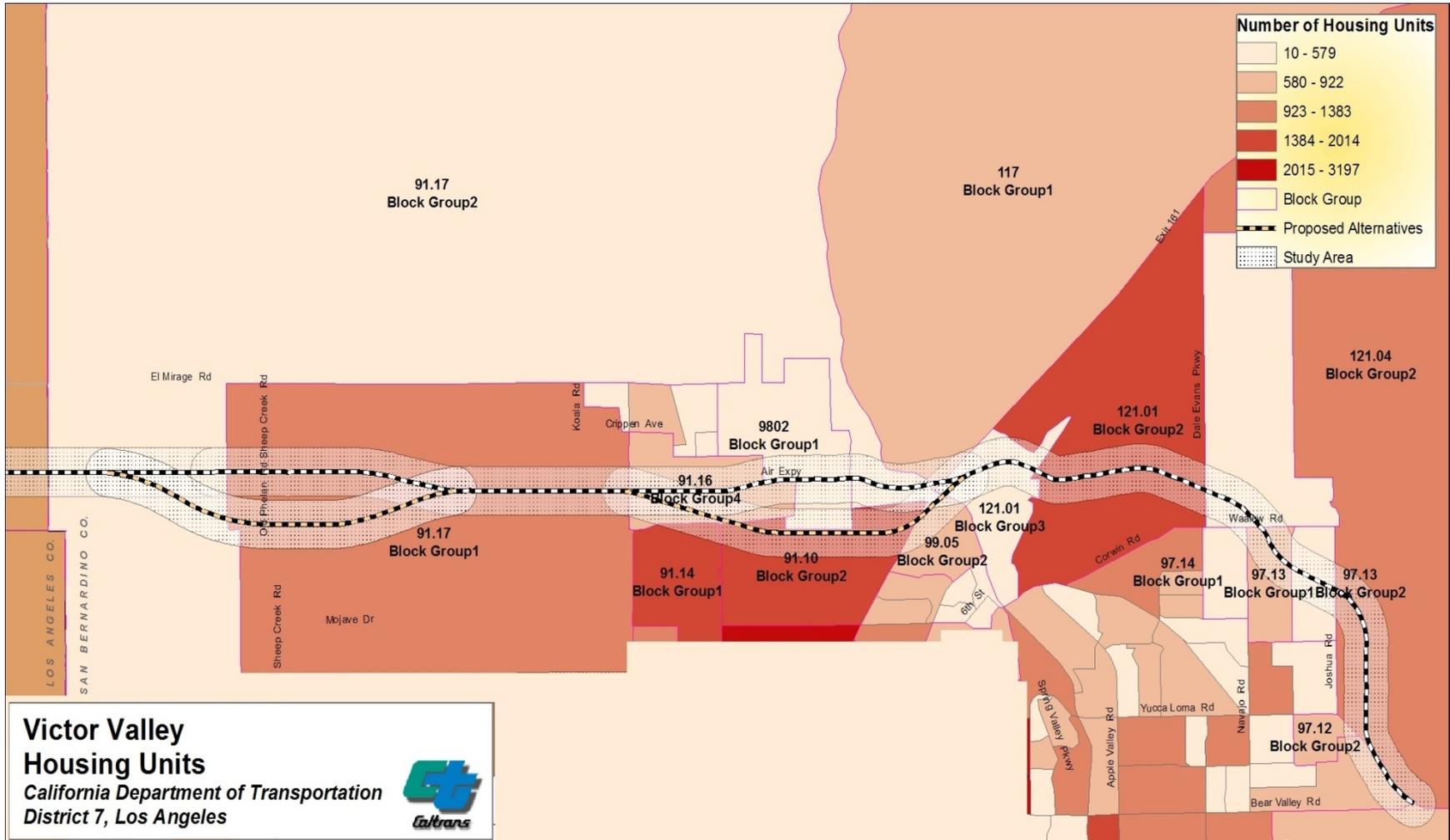
Category	Victor Valley Study Area	Adelanto	San Bernardino County
Annual Median Household Income Level (\$)	N/A	41,113	54,750
Total Population (Persons)	75,392	27,631	1,961,244
Percentage of Population Determined as Poverty Status	22.4	25.6	14.8
Poverty Status - Under 18 Years	7,441	11,423	120,971
Poverty Status - 18 to 64 Years	8,781	15,040	154,049
Poverty Status - 65 Years and Over	654	1,168	16,000
*Data was not available at the block group level. Information from census tracts were used to estimate income levels for the study area.			

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

Community Cohesion

Figure 3.1.4-4 shows the distribution of housing units within the Victor Valley area. Table 3.1.4-11 summarizes the stability index within the study area compared with the city of Adelanto. About 69 percent of the total housing units within the study area are owner-occupied compared with 61 percent in Adelanto. Single-family homes make up 78 percent of the total housing units in the study area compared with 79 percent in Adelanto. Households who have lived within the same housing unit prior to the year 2000 consist of 32.3 percent of the total households within the study area, compared to 24.6 percent in Adelanto. One of the three indicators for community cohesion is somewhat high, which may indicate a moderate sense of community cohesion.

Figure 3.1.4-4 Victor Valley Housing Density



**Table 3.1.4-11 Adelanto Stability Index**

Indicators	Adelanto	Victor Valley Study Area
Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	61.2	69.2
Percent of Single-Family Homes	79.1	77.9
Percent of Households in Same Housing Unit (Prior to Year 2000)	24.6	32.3

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

### Housing

Housing demographics within the study area compared with the city of Adelanto and San Bernardino County are presented in the CIA. The owner-occupied housing in the study area accounts for about 68 percent compared to 61 percent in Adelanto and 63 percent in San Bernardino County. An average home value in the study area is \$186,933, compared to \$170,500 and \$155,000 in Adelanto and San Bernardino County as a whole, respectively. The average household size within the study area is 3.2 persons.

The population within Adelanto is dispersed, with larger concentrations located within residential land use areas located within the northern and southern portions of the city. High residential land uses are located between Air Expressway and Desert Flower Road. Towards the north of Adelanto are high-acreage residential land uses, while towards the south are pockets of single-family residential units.

### *Victorville*

The City's jurisdiction is divided into 10 distinct planning areas. The boundaries for the planning area are defined using topographic features, man-made features, and land use characteristics. The planning areas distinguish the various communities within the city. The planning areas include Baldy Mesa, Central City, East Bear Valley, Golden Triangle, North Mojave, Southern California Logistics Airport, Spring Valley Lake, West City, West Bear Valley, and Northern Expansion.

Baldy Mesa is located west of US 395 and south of Palmdale Road. The area consists primarily of low and very low-density residential land uses, along with some commercial land uses.

Central City is located east of I-15, north of Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard, west of the BNSF railroad line, and south of the Mojave River. The community is primarily composed of low-density residential with open space and moderate commercial land uses.

East Bear Valley is located east of I-15, north of Bear Valley Road, west of Ridgecrest Road, and south of Yates Road/Green Tree Boulevard. This area is primarily composed of an even mix of low-density residential and commercial land uses.

Golden Triangle is the southernmost community and is located north of the California Aqueduct, south of Bear Valley Road, east of US 395, and west of I-15. This community is composed largely of low-density residential, along with moderate commercial land uses.

North Mojave is located northeast of the National Trails Highway and northwest of I-15, with a portion of the planning area extending southeast of I-15 and northeast of the Mojave River. This area has a designated specific land use plan and is composed of open space and heavy industrial uses.

The Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA) is located within the former GAFB and includes areas north of the existing city boundary. It also includes all lands east towards the Mojave River and along the north side of Air Expressway of the former base. The planned Global Access Victorville multimodal freight transportation hub is located within this planning area, which serves as a major transportation goods movement facility for the greater Antelope Valley. This area has a specific land use plan, specific to the SCLA.

The Spring Valley Lake Planning Area is located in southeast Victorville and is north of Bear Valley Road, south of and west of the Mojave River, and east of Ridgecrest Road and the ATSF Railroad line. This area is primarily composed of open space, with moderate low-density residential land uses.

West City is located in the central part of the city and is south of Rancho Road, east of US 395, and west of El Evado Road. This community consists of a high concentration of residents, along with a mix of commercial uses serving the community.

West Bear Valley is located south of Palmdale Road, east of US 395, and west of I-15 and Amargosa Road. This area consists of a high concentration of residents, with a variety of low-density and very low-density land uses. Moderate commercial uses are also included within this community.

The Northern Expansion planning area is located in the northernmost region of the city and includes the greatest concentration of low-density residential use within the city. This area also consists of mostly open space, with moderate industrial and commercial uses.

### Population and Age

Table 3.1.4.-12 summarizes race and ethnic composition of population within the Victor Valley Study area compared with the city of Victorville and San Bernardino County.

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population within the study area is 45,481 persons, which is approximately 40 percent of the total population of Victorville, and has a median age of 37.5 years, higher by approximately 8 years compared to the median age in Victorville. The annual growth rate within the study

area of 3.1 percent is lower than Victorville’s overall growth rate of 8.1 percent. Most of the population is located south of the study area based on the proposed alignment. The alignment is situated mostly within undeveloped lands away from populated areas.

**Table 3.1.4-12 Race and Ethnic Composition of Population in Victorville (2010 U.S. Census)**

Category	Victor Valley Study Area	Victorville	San Bernardino County
2000 Total Population	34,602	64,029	1,709,434
2010 Total Population	45,481	115,903	2,035,210
Net Change	(+) 10,879	(+) 51,874	(+) 325,776
Population Growth Rate (2000-2010)	31%	81%	19%
Annual Average Growth Rate	3.1%	8.1%	1.9%
2010 Median Age (Years)	37.5	29.5	31.2
19 Years and Under	30.7%	36.1%	32.7%
20 to 64 Years	61%	55.8%	58.4%
65 Years and Over	8.3%	8.1%	8.9%
<b>Ethnicity and Race</b>			
Hispanic *	41%	47%	49%
White	37%	28%	33%
Asian *	4%	3%	6%
Black *	14%	16%	8%
American Indian and Alaska Native *	1%	0.7%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander *	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Some Other Race	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Two or More Races	3%	2%	2%
Total Minority	61%	68%	64%
**"Minority individuals" as defined by CEQ.			

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

### Ethnicity and Race

Table 3.1.4-12 shows that Victorville has a lower percentage of Hispanic, Non-Hispanic White, and Non-Hispanic Asian populations than San Bernardino County; however, the percentage of the Non-Hispanic Black population in Victorville is twice that of the county. The percentage difference in ethnic groups between Victorville and San Bernardino County is highest among the Non-Hispanic Asian and Non-Hispanic Black populations.

Within the Victor Valley study area, the Hispanic population accounts for 41 percent of the population. When compared to Victorville, the percentage of Hispanic population within the study area is lower. The Non-Hispanic White population

percentage is higher than that of Victorville. Non-Hispanic Asian population accounts for 4 percent of the population within the study area, which is slightly higher than that of Victorville. The Non-Hispanic Black population is slightly lower compared to Victorville. The Non-Hispanic American Indian population is marginally higher in the study area than Victorville. For the study area, the total minority population is approximately 61 percent.

### Income

The income level and poverty status of the population within the Victor Valley study area compared with the city of Victorville and San Bernardino County are presented in Table 3.1.4-13.

**Table 3.1.4-13 Victorville Income Levels (2010 U.S. Census)**

Category	Victor Valley Study Area	Victorville	San Bernardino County
Annual Median Household Income Level (\$)	N/A	52,165	54,750
Total Population (Persons)	75,392	104,099	1,961,244
Percentage of Population Determined as Poverty Status	22.4	19.4	14.8
Poverty Status (%) - Under 18 Years	44.1	48.7	41.5
Poverty Status (%) - 18 to 64 Years	52	47.1	52.9
Poverty Status (%) - 65 Years and Over	3.9	4.1	5.4

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

The percentage of low-income individuals in Victorville is 19.4 percent, which is higher than that of San Bernardino County but lower than that of the study area. Most of the low-income population is individuals below 18 years, followed by individuals age 18 to 64 years, then individuals 65 years and above. The distribution by age of low-income individuals is relatively uniform within the study area and respective jurisdictions, where the majority is individuals below 18 years and individuals 18 to 64 years of age.

Within the Victor Valley study area, there are approximately 16,867 persons considered to be of low-income or at poverty level, which constitutes about 22 percent of the total population. The highest percentage was among individuals 18 to 64 years of age, followed by individuals under 18 years of age. The lowest level of poverty was among individuals 65 years and above.

### Community Cohesion

Table 3.1.4-14 summarizes the stability index within the study area compared with the city of Victorville. It shows about 69 percent of the total housing units within the study area are owner-occupied compared with about 65 percent in Victorville. Single-family homes make up about 78 percent of the total housing units in the study area, which is the same as in Victorville. Within the study area, households who have lived

within the same housing unit prior to the year 2000 are about 32 percent of the total households, compared with about 29 percent in Victorville.

As indicated in Table 3.1.4-14, two of the three indicators for community cohesion are somewhat high, which may indicate a moderate sense of community cohesion.

**Table 3.1.4-14 Victorville Stability Index**

Indicators	Victorville	Victor Valley Study Area
Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	64.9	69.2
Percent of Single-Family Homes	79.4	77.9
Percent of Households in Same Housing Unit (Prior to Year 2000)	28.5	32.3

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

### Housing

Housing demographics within the study area compared with the city of Victorville and San Bernardino County are presented in the CIA. The owner-occupied housing in the study area accounts for about 68 percent compared to about 62 and 63 percent in Victorville and San Bernardino County, respectively. An average home value in the study area is \$186,933, compared to \$227,300 and \$155,000 in Victorville and San Bernardino County as a whole, respectively. The average household size within the study area is 3.2 persons.

The population within Victorville is dispersed proportionately, with larger concentrations located south of the proposed alignment. Housing densities are localized within residential land use areas, in this case, north of the study area.

### Apple Valley

#### Population and Age

Table 3.1.4-15 summarizes race and ethnic composition of population within the Victor Valley Study area compared with the town of Apple valley and San Bernardino County.

Based on the 2010 U.S. Census, the total population within the study area is approximately 45,481 persons, which is roughly 66 percent of the total population of Apple Valley, and the median age for the study area is 37.5 years, which is slightly higher by 0.5 years than Apple Valley. The annual growth rate within the study area is 3.1 percent, which is higher than Apple Valley’s overall growth rate of 2.8 percent.

#### Ethnicity and Race

Table 3.1.4-15 shows that the town has a lower percentage of Hispanics and a higher percentage for Non-Hispanic Whites compared to those of the county. The Non-Hispanic Asian population declined, while the remaining ethnic group population

changes were marginal. When compared to the county, the most notable differences in population changes occurred in the Hispanic and Non-Hispanic White populations.

**Table 3.1.4-15 Race and Ethnic Composition of Population  
in Apple Valley (2010 U.S. Census)**

Category	Victor Valley Study Area	Apple Valley	San Bernardino County
2000 Total Population	34,602	54,239	1,709,434
2010 Total Population	45,481	69,135	2,035,210
Net Change	(+) 10,879	(+) 14,896	(+) 325,776
Population Growth Rate (2000-2010)	31%	27.5%	19%
Annual Average Growth Rate	3.1%	2.8%	1.9%
Total Population (Persons)	45,481	69,135	2,035,210
2010 Median Age (Years)	37.5	37	31.2
19 Years and Under	30.7%	31.1%	32.7%
20 to 64 Years	61%	53.4%	58.4%
65 Years and Over	8.3%	15.4%	8.9%
<b>Ethnicity and Race</b>			
Hispanic *	41%	29%	49%
White	37%	55%	33%
Asian *	4%	3%	6%
Black *	14%	9%	8%
American Indian and Alaska Native *	1%	0.5%	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander *	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Some Other Race	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%
Two or More Races	3%	3%	2%
Total Minority	61%	41%	64%

\*\*Minority individuals” as defined by CEQ.

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

The Hispanic population accounts for 41 percent of the population within the study area, which is higher than that of Apple Valley. The Non-Hispanic White population is lower than that of Apple Valley. Non-Hispanic Asians account for 4 percent of the population within the study area and is higher compared to Apple Valley’s percentage. The Non-Hispanic Black population percentage is higher than that of Apple Valley. For Non-Hispanic American Indians, there is a marginal increase in percentage between the study area and Apple Valley, and for Non-Hispanic Some Other, there is a marginal increase within the study area compared to Apple Valley. The percentage of Individuals of Two or More Races is about the same as that of Apple Valley. For the study area, the total minority population is approximately 61 percent.

### Income

The income level and poverty status of the population within the Victor Valley study area compared with the town of Apple Valley and San Bernardino County are presented in Table 3.1.4-16. Apple Valley, in comparison to San Bernardino County,

has a higher percentage (17.9 percent) of individuals classified as low-income; however, when compared to the study area, Apple Valley has a lower percentage. The majority group classified as low-income is individuals 18 to 64 years of age, followed by individuals below 18 years of age, and by individuals 65 years and above. The distribution by age of low-income individuals is relatively uniform within the study area and respective jurisdictions where the majority is individuals below 18 years and individuals 18 to 64 years of age.

**Table 3.1.4-16 Apple Valley Income Levels**

Category	Victor Valley Study Area	Apple Valley	San Bernardino County
Annual Median Household Income Level (\$)	N/A	48,491	54,750
Total Population (Persons)	75,392	67,075	1,961,244
Percentage of Population Determined as Poverty Status	22.4	17.9	14.8
Poverty Status (%) - Under 18 Years	44.1	41.3	41.5
Poverty Status (%) - 18 to 64 Years	52	52.9	52.9
Poverty Status (%) - 65 Years and Over	3.9	5.7	5.4

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

Within the study area, there are approximately 16,867 persons considered to be of low-income or poverty status, which constitutes about 22 percent of the total population. The highest percentage was among individuals 18 to 64 years of age, followed by individuals under 18 years of age. The lowest percentage of the population considered in poverty status is individuals 65 years and above.

### Community Cohesion

Table 3.1.4-17 summarizes the stability index within the study area compared to the town of Apple Valley. About 69 percent of the total housing units within the study area are owner-occupied compared with about 71 percent in Apple Valley. Single-family homes make up about 78 percent of the total housing units in the study area compared with about 76 percent in Apple Valley. Households who have lived within the same housing unit prior to the year 2000 consist of about 32 percent of the total households in the study area, compared with about 36 percent in Apple Valley. Within the study area, Apple Valley shows the highest percentage of households in the same housing unit since the year 2000.

**Table 3.1.4-17 Apple Valley Stability Index**

Indicators	Apple Valley	Victor Valley Study Area
Percent of Owner-Occupied Housing Units	70.7	69.2
Percent of Single-Family Homes	76.2	77.9
Percent of Households in Same Housing Unit (Prior to Year 2000)	36	32.3

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

### Housing

Housing demographics within the study area compared with Apple Valley and San Bernardino County are presented in the CIA. The owner-occupied housing in the study area accounts for about 68 percent compared to 69 percent in Apple Valley and 63 percent in San Bernardino County. An average home value in the study area is \$186,933, compared to \$262,100 and \$155,000 in Apple Valley and San Bernardino County as a whole, respectively. The average household size within the study area is 3.2 persons.

### **Environmental Consequences**

#### *No Build Alternative*

No impacts would occur under the No Build Alternative.

#### *Build Alternatives*

#### Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives

The Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives share the same physical alignment and as a result both alternatives share the same impacts which are discussed below.

#### *Palmdale*

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives project alignments are located within the fringe of Palmdale and within semi-developed areas. Palmdale, in relation to other communities within the study area, is generally more developed and urbanized in character. The majority of the population within the Palmdale study area is concentrated south of the proposed project within more developed areas, while a smaller portion of the population is situated within the edges of the city. Direct impacts that may affect community character are not likely to occur. The proposed project alignment has been designed in a manner such to avoid negative effects on existing neighborhoods and communities within the project area. The proposed project alignment has been designed to avoid negative effects on existing neighborhoods and communities within the project area. The proposed project alignment was designed to be sensitive to the existing communities and as a result avoids bisecting existing established neighborhoods.

The Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments would have notable impacts, defined as displacements that would require significant lead time and substantial financial allocations due to three Palmdale School District properties located within the right-of-way (ROW) of the main alignment. Based on the Draft Relocation Impact Report (DRIR, 2014), it was determined the acquisition and relocation of these school facilities would require considerable lead time and substantial financial resources. Caltrans would provide adequate replacement properties for the displaced Palmdale School District administrative and operational facilities. The functional replacement process may take up to 8 years to complete due to the complexity of the property; temporary facilities may be utilized in the interim.

Construction of the proposed alignment would also directly affect 16 residential units, in which 6 full and 10 partial acquisitions would be required. The 6 full acquisitions would include the acquisition of six single-family residences. The remaining 10 acquisitions are partial and do not require the acquisition of single-family residences. The residences consist of single-family homes built between the mid 1950s and mid 1980s, in which the condition of the homes ranges from fair to good; however, the study indicated that there is adequate replacement housing within the area for those displaced, and the relocation of residents would not pose an impact on the community. All displacees would be treated in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended.

Under the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, indirect impacts as a result of the project may include changes to existing access and circulation, increased urbanization, growth, and quality of life. Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, four freeway interchanges would be constructed within Palmdale at the intersection of SR-14 and the proposed HDC, 20<sup>th</sup> Street East, 50<sup>th</sup> Street East, and 90<sup>th</sup> Street East. Access points to the proposed HDC from local arterial streets would provide increased circulation. In addition, as discussed in the growth analysis, increased development of commercial/ industrial units may take place along areas adjacent to interchange locations.

Proposed community enhancements under the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives include construction of a bike path/lane adjacent to the HDC, which would provide the community with additional mobility options. The proposed bike lane/path would begin at the Palmdale Metrolink Station and would continue east towards San Bernardino County. The bike path/lane would provide a link for communities within Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. The bike path would promote community character by improving connectivity within the community and allow greater use of active transportation for community members as a means of transportation within the local community. In addition, as previously discussed in Chapter 2, a multi-use interpretive pullout for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists would also be constructed. The multiuse interpretive pullout would serve as a resting point for bicyclists and pedestrians.

### **Variation A**

Under the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, the alignment would dip slightly south of the main alignment, approximately between 15<sup>th</sup> Street East and Little Rock Wash. Under Variation A, the proposed alignment would be shifted slightly south of the main alignment, affecting an industrial property (APN # 3022012029), which has been identified as a salvage yard. Based on the DRIR (2014), this would result in a partial acquisition in which there is adequate supply of industrial replacement properties within the area for those displaced, and the relocation of such would not pose an impact on the community. All displacees would be treated in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

### *Unincorporated Los Angeles County*

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments are located within rural and undeveloped areas of Los Angeles County within close proximity to the existing community of Lake Los Angeles. The proposed alignments are approximately 2 miles south of Lake Los Angeles and do not bisect the community; however, the community of Lake Los Angeles is characterized by a more rural environment and lifestyle compared to other communities within the study area. As a result, the community character of Lake Los Angeles may be indirectly affected by the project.

The project would result in greater access and mobility in previously isolated areas; however, based on the existing low-density land use designations as identified within the study area and the results of growth analysis presented in Section 3.1.2 of this environmental document, growth in this area is expected to be limited (*Preliminary Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan*, 2011).

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments would also directly affect 13 residential units within Lake Los Angeles. Eight full and 5 partial acquisitions would be required. The residences consist of single-family homes built in the 1950s, in which the condition of the homes ranges from fair to good. It was determined that there is adequate replacement housing within the area for those displaced, and the relocation of residents would not have a noticeable impact on the community at large.

It is reasonable to assume that displaced persons would seek replacement housing that is similar in location, cost, and character to their displaced homes. This would allow displaced persons to preserve their community ties, send their children to the same schools, and reduce disruption to their employment and personal activities; however, actual relocations may vary according to personal preferences and market conditions at the time of displacement.

Relocation assistance payments and counseling would be provided to persons and businesses in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation and decent, safe, and sanitary housing for displaced residents. All eligible displacees would be entitled to moving expenses.

In addition, the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments would impact the Meadowbrook Dairy Farm located at the northwest corner of Sheep Creek Road/Parkdale Road intersection; however, it has been confirmed that the dairy farm is no longer in business.

Proposed community enhancements as a result of the project include construction of a bike path/lane adjacent to the HDC, which would provide the communities within unincorporated Los Angeles additional mobility options. The proposed bike lane/path, which begins at the Palmdale Metrolink and continues east towards San Bernardino County, would provide greater connectivity for residents within

unincorporated Los Angeles and encourages the use of active transportation modes within the area. The bike path/lane would also provide a link for communities within unincorporated Los Angeles to Palmdale and Adelanto.

Indirect impacts as a result of the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives may affect existing circulation and access and quality of life. Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, five freeway interchanges would be constructed within the unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and are located at the intersection between 170<sup>th</sup> Street East and the proposed HDC, 210<sup>th</sup> Street East, 240<sup>th</sup> Street East, Oasis Road, and Sheep Creek Road. Access points to the proposed HDC from local arterial streets would provide increased circulation and access. As discussed in the growth analysis, development within the unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County would be composed of low-density developments to maintain the rural character of the area (Preliminary Draft Antelope Valley Area Plan, 2011). The community of Lake Los Angeles has voiced concerns over construction of the HDC and its impact on quality of life. In addition, concerns were expressed during a community meeting over light and glare from the project. Caltrans will implement measures to offset indirect impacts as a result of light glare on the rural communities within unincorporated areas within Los Angeles County.

#### **Variation D**

Variation D, developed in part by public outreach efforts and community input, would reduce potential impacts to the community of Lake Los Angeles by realigning the proposed alignment farther south away from the community. Variation D poses less of an impact on the community character of Lake Los Angeles because the associated noise, lighting, and other proximity effects from the new facility would become more distant. The community of Lake Los Angeles is a small, rural town by nature; by realigning the freeway farther away from the community, the rural character of the community can be preserved. Indirect impacts may include changes to existing access and circulation, and quality of life. Light glare, which has been voiced by the community as a concern, may be further offset under Variation D by creating a greater distance between the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway facility and the community.

*Victor Valley (Unincorporated San Bernardino County, Adelanto, Victorville, Apple Valley)*

Most of the population within the study area is mainly concentrated south of the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments and is located within incorporated areas (i.e., Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley). Based on the proposed alignment, established communities would not be bisected as a result of the project.

#### **Variation B**

Under Variation B, the proposed alignment would be shifted south of the main alignment to avoid acquisition of the former Meadowbrook Dairy Farm at the

northwest corner of the Sheep Creek Road/Parkdale Road intersection; however, the dairy farm is no longer in business at this time.

#### *Adelanto*

Within Adelanto, the major concentrations of populations are located within the northern and southern segments of the city. The area in between is largely undeveloped, with mostly scattered developments and vacant land. The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments are situated within this particular area. As a result, the proposed alignment under the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives would not bisect densely populated areas; therefore, they would have no impacts on community cohesion.

Construction of the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments would require a partial acquisition of an existing residence as described in Section 3.1.4-2 below. However, as indicated in the DRIR (2014), there is adequate replacement housing within the area for those displaced, and the relocation of residents would not pose an impact on the community.

Relocation assistance payments and counseling would be provided to persons and businesses in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation and decent, safe, and sanitary housing for displaced residents. All eligible displacees would be entitled to moving expenses.

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives include a proposed bike lane/path adjacent to the HDC that begins at the Palmdale Metrolink Station and continues east towards San Bernardino County. The bike path/lane would provide a link for communities within Adelanto to other communities located within Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties.

Mobility within the community would be enhanced as a result of the proposed bike path/lane in which the incorporation of a bike path would provide the community with additional mobility options. Community character and livability would be enhanced as a result of the proposed bike path/lane. Studies have highlighted the social benefits of paths that can accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, including contributing to healthier lifestyles, spaces to encounter neighbors, and enhanced civic pride. Incorporation of a bike path would provide the community with an additional transportation option.

In addition, the HDC Project would provide safer transportation routes and greater accessibility to jobs and activities for the communities within the proposed lane limits.

Indirect impacts as a result of the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives may affect existing circulation and access, increased urbanization, growth, and quality of life. Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, three freeway interchanges would be constructed

within Adelanto and are located at the intersection between Caughlin Road and the proposed HDC, Koala Road, and US 395. Access points to the proposed HDC from local arterial streets would provide increased circulation. In addition, as discussed in the growth analysis, increased development of commercial/industrial units may take place along areas adjacent to interchange locations.

### *Victorville*

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments are within the northern fringe of the city. Based on the study area for this particular area, the area consists of largely undeveloped and vacant land, and it is situated away from established communities. Within the study area within Victorville is a community of homes located on the SCLA property that were once part of military family housing on the former GAFB. Based on field visits, the units are vacant and uninhabitable, in various states of disrepair, and have been left unattended for many years. As a result, community character would not be directly affected as a result of the HDC Project. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the GAFB is listed as a superfund site. A superfund site, as defined as by EPA, is an uncontrolled or abandoned place where hazardous wastes are located, possibly affecting local ecosystems and people. Cleanup efforts are currently ongoing.

Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, the proposed alignment would be cutting off an access/entrance point to the federal prison facility located on Phantom Road East. As a result, Caltrans will provide an alternative access point by relocating the entrance point to the eastern segment of the prison facility.

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments would also require full acquisition of 29 residential units. The residences consist of former military family housing located on the SCLA and are in disrepair. According to a source from the SCLA, the units have been closed since 1992, and they are not considered part of the current local housing stock. All displacees would be treated in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

Proposed community enhancements as a result of the project include construction of a bike path/lane adjacent to the HDC, which would provide the residents within Victorville with additional mobility options. The proposed bike lane/path would begin at the Palmdale Metrolink Station and would continue east towards San Bernardino County. The bike path/lane would provide a link for residents within Victorville to other communities in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. Community character and livability would be enhanced as a result of the proposed bike path. Studies have highlighted their benefits, including contributing to healthier lifestyles, spaces to encounter neighbors, and enhanced civic pride. Incorporation of a bike path would provide the community with an additional transportation option.

Indirect impacts as a result of the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives may affect existing circulation and access, increased urbanization,

growth, and quality of life. Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, three freeway interchanges would be constructed within Victorville and are located at the intersection between Phantom Road East, Phantom Road West, National Trails Highway, and the proposed HDC. Access points to the proposed HDC from local arterial streets would provide increased circulation and access for motorists. In addition, as discussed in the growth analysis, increased development of commercial/industrial units may occur along areas adjacent to interchange locations.

### **Variation E**

Under Variation E, the proposed alignment would be shifted south of the main alignment to provide greater distance from the federal prison. However, based on the DRIR (2014), as a result of the shift in alignment, it was determined that the acquisition and relocation of 10 industrial/manufacturing properties would be required. The industrial/manufacturing properties affected are located along Rancho Road and Violet Road and include the USA Company Inc.; USA Services Inc.; Robertson Ready Mix Co.; Apex Bulk Commodities; Holliday Rock Co.; Cal-Silica; and Northwest Pipe Company. Based on the DRIR (2014), significant lead time and resources would be required to relocate such properties.

Relocation assistance payments and counseling would be provided to persons and businesses in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation and decent, safe, and sanitary housing for displaced residents. All eligible displacees would be entitled to moving expenses.

### *Apple Valley*

The proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments are within the northern fringe of Apple Valley. Based on the study area for this particular area, the area is largely undeveloped and vacant. As a result direct impacts on the community character of Apple Valley are not anticipated.

Construction of the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternative alignments would also directly affect 14 residential units. Eleven (11) full and 3 partial acquisitions would be required. The residences consist of single-family homes built between the 1940s and mid 1950s. The condition of the units ranges from average to fair. Based on the DRIR (2014) it was determined that there is adequate replacement housing within the area for those displaced, and the relocation of residents would not have an impact on the community. All displacees would be treated in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

Proposed community enhancements as a result of the project include construction of a bike path/lane adjacent to the HDC, which would provide the residents of Apple Valley with additional mobility options. The proposed bike lane/path would begin at the Palmdale Metrolink Station and would continue east towards San Bernardino County. The bike path/lane would provide a link for Apple Valley residents to

adjacent communities within Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. In addition, two vista points will be constructed in Apple Valley located along the Choco Road and Bear Road off ramps. Vista points are informal pullouts where motorists can safely view scenery or park and relax, but do not have restrooms. The vista point at Choco Road would provide a scenic view with an overlook of the Town of Apple Valley, while the vista point located at Bear Road will provide a scenic view of Deadman's Point.

Indirect impacts as a result of the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives may affect existing circulation and access, increased urbanization, and growth. Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, two freeway interchanges would be constructed within the Town of Apple Valley and are located at the intersection between Choco Road, Dale Evans Parkway, and the proposed HDC. Access points to the proposed HDC from local arterial streets would provide increased circulation and access for motorists. In addition, as discussed in the growth analysis, increased development of commercial/industrial units may take place along areas adjacent to interchange locations.

#### *Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway with HSR Alternatives*

Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives with HSR, the HSR alignment is to be constructed within the centerline of the main HDC alignment, with exclusions within Palmdale and Victorville in which the rail alignment diverges from the main HDC alignment to connect to station locations in Palmdale and Victorville. As a result, additional ROW would be acquired for construction of the HSR alignment within Palmdale and Victorville. The impacts, as previously discussed under the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives, will be included under the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives with HSR.

#### *Palmdale*

Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives with HSR within Palmdale, a station location would be developed as part of this project. The existing Palmdale Metrolink station would be expanded to accommodate future HSR patrons. Additional parking would also be provided. The proposed station location would provide transit connections to the existing Palmdale Transit Center and would allow greater transit options for Palmdale residents in addition to a greater sense of connectivity within the region.

The HSR alignment has the potential to affect community character, in which increased development and growth may occur through transit-oriented development (TOD). Based on the growth analysis, Palmdale would most likely revise its planning and zoning near the rail stations to encourage TOD to realize, among other benefits, increased walk-in ridership and conversion of some land uses for development. Such TOD would be transformational for this region because it emphasizes higher densities, mixed uses, pedestrian and bicycle use, feeder bus service, and reduced parking, which is not evident at present. Moreover, TOD impacts would be expected

to be concentrated between 0.25 and 0.5 mile from station areas (i.e., easy walking distance).

#### *Palmdale Rail Option 1*

Under HSR Option 1, there would be no residential parcel impacts, 18 exclusive nonresidential parcel impacts, and 6 government facility parcel impacts. The 18 nonresidential parcel impacts include various commercial businesses, ranging from auto repair to storage facilities and industrial companies. The 6 government parcel facilities impacted include the Lockheed Martin facility located on a federally owned parcel at Sierra Highway and Lockheed Way, the Palmdale Transit Center/ Metrolink Station located at Sierra Highway and Technology Drive, and 2 parking lots owned by the City of Palmdale located at Sierra Highway and Technology Drive. Impacts to the Lockheed Martin facility would involve a partial acquisition in which a portion of the parking lot would be acquired and relocated. There are no potential residential impacts under Option 1.

Option 1 includes the relocation of commercial and industrial properties, including Allen Recycling, Lusk Machine Products, and 3 other industrial buildings and structures, and 8 to 10 mid-size businesses, which include auto repair shops and warehouses. Heavy machinery and equipment associated with such facilities would require greater amounts of time and relocation costs compared to Option 7.

In addition, as stated in the *DRIR Supplementary Report of Rail Feeder Options to New Proposed High Desert Corridor (September 2013)*, although there is an adequate supply of replacement business properties, relocations of businesses are more complex compared to residential relocations. Because businesses serve a particular clientele that is specific to a particular area, potential relocations of businesses may disrupt services received by that particular clientele. In addition, businesses may suffer from economic impacts due to a potential loss of clientele as a result of the relocation.

Although direct impacts to residential parcels would be avoided, potential impacts to quality of life may be at risk in which the HSR alignment, in conjunction with the proposed main freeway alignment, may create an “island” effect for the residences located along 10<sup>th</sup> Street East, in which the HSR alignment and main HDC alignment would be surrounding the residences from the northeast and west, respectively. If selected, measures would be implemented to offset the indirect impacts (i.e., noise and visual) on such residences as a result of the HSR Option 1 alignment.

Relocation assistance payments and counseling would be provided to persons and businesses in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Act and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation and decent, safe, and sanitary housing for displaced residents. All eligible displacees would be entitled to moving expenses.

### *Palmdale Rail Option 7*

Option 7 would require the relocation of homes and businesses located along 10<sup>th</sup> Street East. A total of 20 residential parcels would be impacted, in which 18 full acquisitions and 2 partial acquisitions would be required. Most of these units include single-family homes and one multi-unit duplex. In addition, 8 nonresidential parcel impacts would also occur under this option, in addition to 7 government facility parcel impacts; however, as mentioned in the *DRIR* (2014), there is a sufficient supply of replacement residential and nonresidential properties within the replacement area. All displacees would be treated in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970.

Option 7 would also require the relocation of nonresidential units, which are mainly composed of industrial, warehouse, commercial, auto repair, and government facilities. Under Option 7 the following facilities would be impacted: a water test center/utility owned by the City of Palmdale, located at the corner of Rancho Vista Boulevard (Avenue P) and 20<sup>th</sup> Street, the Lockheed Martin facility located on a federally owned parcel at Sierra Highway and Lockheed Way, the Palmdale Transit Center/Metrolink Station located at Sierra Highway and Technology Drive, and two parking lots owned by the City of Palmdale located at Sierra Highway and Technology Drive. Impacts to the Lockheed Martin facility would be a partial acquisition in which a portion of the parking lot would need to be acquired and relocated.

The *Supplemental DRIR* (December 2013) identified that among the two options, 1 and 7, Option 1 would involve higher costs and more complex property displacements because of the relocation of commercial and industrial properties, including Allen Recycling, Lusk Machine Products, and 3 other industrial building structures, and 8 to 10 mid-size business operations, which include auto repair shops and industrial warehouses. Heavy machinery and equipment associated with such facilities would require greater amounts of time and relocation costs compared to Option 7.

### *Victorville*

Under the proposed Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives with HSR, the HSR alignment diverges from the main alignment to connect with the proposed Victorville Xpress West Station in Victorville. It would be located immediately west of I-15 at Dale Evans Parkway. This station would be constructed in conjunction with the XpressWest HSR service between Las Vegas and Victorville as currently planned. Construction of this station is not part of the HDC Project. The proposed HSR alignment in Victorville would be located in an undeveloped, vacant area away from nearby existing communities. As a result, community impacts within this particular area are not anticipated.

### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

The following standard conditions will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to communities within the project area in addition to minimization and mitigation measures provided in other sections of this report.

**SC-COM -1:** The project will be designed to be sensitive to the existing environment in which it is constructed. Early coordination with local jurisdictions and community members will be conducted throughout the design of the project to ensure that the project is constructed in a manner that is acceptable to the community in which it is located.

**SC-COM -2:** The project will be designed to conform with local, general, and specific plans.

**SC-COM -3:** The project will be designed in a manner that will reduce light glare within rural areas, more specifically in compliance with the Rural Outdoor Lighting District Ordinance of Los Angeles County.

#### **3.1.4.2 Relocation and Property Acquisition**

##### ***Regulatory Setting***

Caltrans' Relocation Assistance Program (RAP) is based on the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (as amended) and Title 49 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 24. The purpose of the RAP is to ensure that persons displaced as a result of a transportation project are treated fairly, consistently, and equitably so that such persons will not suffer disproportionate injuries as a result of projects designed for the benefit of the public as a whole. Please see Appendix D for a summary of the RAP.

All relocation services and benefits are administered without regard to race, color, national origin, or sex in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act (42 U.S.C. 2000d, *et seq.*). Please see Appendix C for a copy of Caltrans' Title VI Policy Statement.

##### ***Affected Environment***

A Draft Relocation Impact Report (DRIR) was prepared for the project by the Caltrans Right-of-Way (ROW) Division and was completed in May, 2013 and revised in August, 2014. In addition, the Supplementary Report of Rail Feeder Options to New Proposed High Desert Corridor, which serves as a supplemental to the DRIR, was completed December, 2013. A second supplemental report, the Supplementary Report of Variation B-1 Alignment (Between Oasis Road and Caughlin Road) to the New Proposed High Desert Corridor, was finalized in March, 2014. The purpose of the DRIR is to analyze the effects the proposed project would have on residential and nonresidential occupants within the proposed project alignments.

The project corridor is 500 feet wide between SR-14 and US 395 and 300 feet wide between US 395 and SR-18; the rail connections are somewhat narrower. It passes through moderately developed areas at either end, with the majority of the central area being sparsely developed. Since there is currently no existing facility in place, every property along the corridor would be subject to either full or partial acquisition. See the Land Use and Community Cohesion sections of this report for a full description of the existing characteristics of each town and community along the corridor.

### ***Environmental Consequences***

#### ***No Build Alternative***

No relocation impacts would occur under the No Build Alternative.

#### ***Build Alternatives***

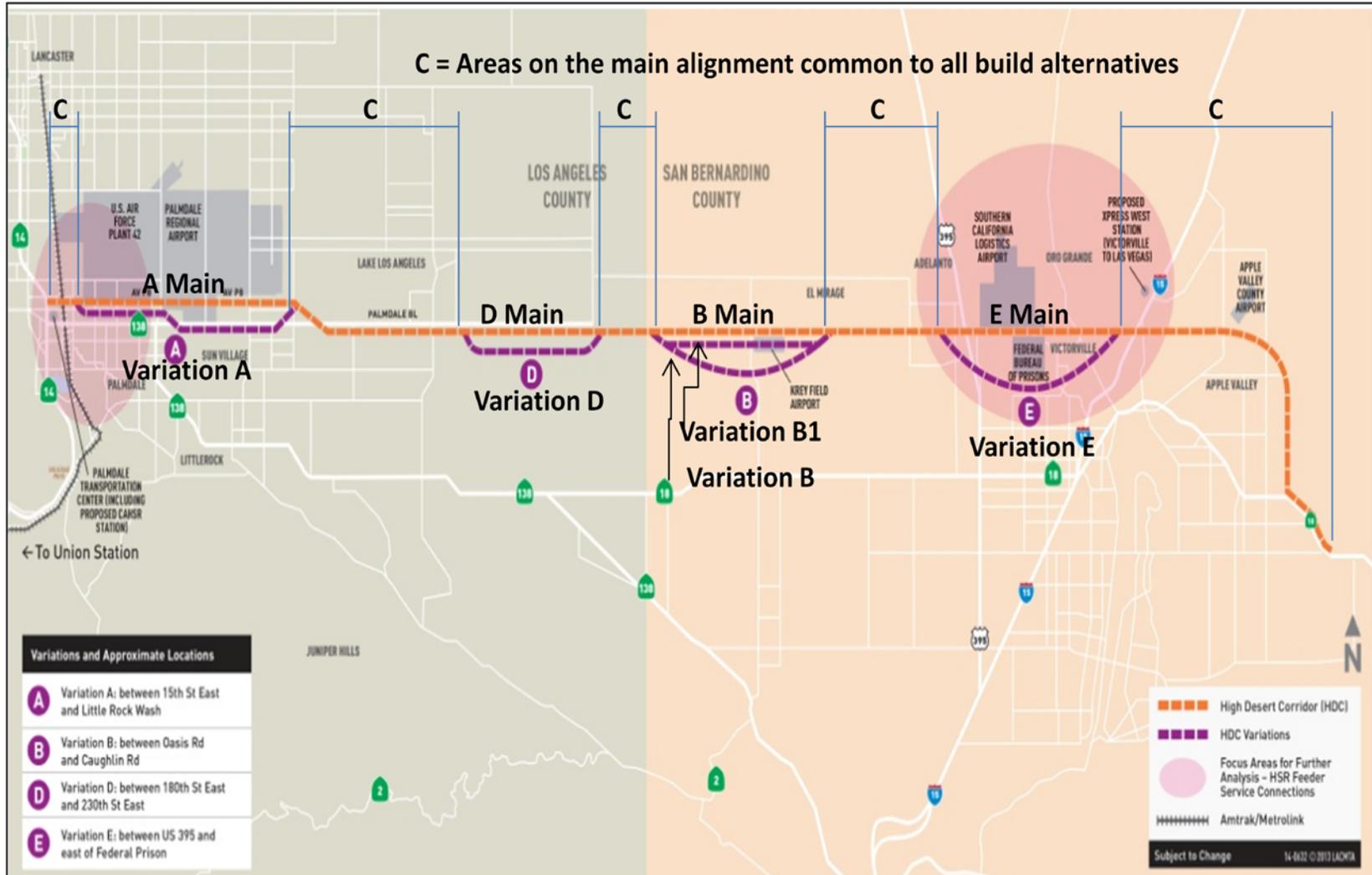
All of the build alternatives would result in full acquisitions, partial acquisitions, permanent easements, and temporary construction easements. It is important to note that the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway alternatives share a common footprint and therefore, the impacts will be the same. The Freeway/Expressway w/ HSR and Freeway/Tollway with HSR alternatives also share a common footprint (and impacts). For comparison purposes the impacts from the alternatives with and without HSR are discussed together. A list of all properties that may be acquired is included in Appendix I, which identifies all forms of acquisitions, including partial and temporary, required for each of the alternatives.

In evaluating the impacts associated with the build alternatives, the following comparisons are made:

- The build alternatives against each other (the areas that are shared by all four build alternatives)
- The variations against the corresponding segment of the main alignment
- The Palmdale rail connection options against each other, and
- The XpressWest rail connection options against each other

The following discussion provides a summary of these four points of comparison and is based on the data presented in Table 3.1.4-18. This table provides an estimate of the number of permanent full acquisitions and associated displacements that would result from the proposed project broken down by alternative, variation, and rail option. Figure 3.1.4-5 shows the areas along the alignment that correspond to the rows in the table.

Figure 3.1.4-5 Key Relocation Map to Table 3.1.4-18



**Table 3.1.4-18 Residential and nonresidential Relocation Impacts of the Build Alternatives**

Alignment/Variations	Freeway/Expressway & Freeway/Tollway Alternatives			Freeway/Expressway Freeway/Tollway with HSR Alternatives		
	Residential	Non-Residential	Total	Residential	Non-Residential	Total
Main Alignment/common areas	46	24	70	26	34	60
Variation A Main Alignment	1	8	9	8	1	9
Variation A*	34	19	53	n/a	n/a	n/a
Variation B Main Alignment	2	1	3	2	1	3
Variation B	2	1	3	2	1	3
Variation B1	1	7	8	1	7	8
Variation D Main Alignment	12	7	19	12	7	19
Variation D	2	1	3	3	1	4
Variation E Main Alignment**	1	1	2	1	1	2
Variation E	1	11	12	1	4	5
Palmdale Rail Option #1	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	17	17
Palmdale Rail Option #7	n/a	n/a	n/a	18	14	32
XpressWest Rail connection Main Alignment	n/a	n/a	n/a	12	0	12
XpressWest Rail connection Variation E	n/a	n/a	n/a	20	1	21
<p>*Note: Variation A was not considered a viable option for alternatives with HSR; therefore, no study of affected properties under Variation A was performed.</p> <p>**Note: There are a number of abandoned military housing properties in this section of the main alignment. These are not included here since they are unoccupied and would not require tenant relocation.</p> <p>See Appendix I for complete list of potentially affected developed and undeveloped parcels.</p>						

Source: Revised High Desert Corridor Draft Relocation Impact Report, 2014.

Table 3.1.4-18 shows that the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway alternatives would result in 70 displacements (46 residential and 24 non-residential) in the common areas of the main alignment compared to 60 (26 residential and 34 non-residential) for the two HSR alternatives. However, the actual number of displacees would be higher and would depend upon which combination of variations is selected, as can be noted, impacts associated with the variations and the corresponding sections of the main alignment are very similar, with two exceptions described below:

1. Variation A (non-HSR alternatives), where there are 53 displacements (34 residential and 19 non-residential) compared to 9 (1 residential and 8 non-residential) for the main alignment, and
2. Variation D (for both the HSR and non-HSR alternatives), where the main alignment has about 5 to 6 times the number of displacements compared to Variation D.

When comparing the Palmdale rail connection options, Option #1 would result in displacement of a few more non-residential properties; however, Option #7 would result in substantially more residential displacements. Likewise, the Variation E rail connection to the XpressWest station would result in substantially more residential displacements than would the connection that follows the main alignment.

Based on the Revised DRIR (2014), there are sufficient residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural properties available in the replacement area for all properties affected under all of the build alternatives, including variations and rail options. The Last Resort Housing Program will not be necessary because the residential housing stock in the replacement area is ample; however, should the housing market improve and prices increase, the Last Resort Housing Program would be available to assist any residential displacees unable to afford comparable replacement housing.

Similarly, according to the Revised DRIR (2014), current commercial, industrial, and agricultural real estate markets confirm that the majority of nonresidential properties impacted by all alternatives, variations, and rail options would have sufficient replacement property available for lease/purchase and or raw land for development. In addition, most of the non-residential properties that may be acquired appear to be of the type commonly found in the area and would not be expected to pose extraordinary relocation issues. A few exceptions are noted as follows:

#### *All Build Alternatives*

##### *The Palmdale School District*

All of the build alternatives would require full acquisition of 3 Palmdale School District properties that house administrative and operational facilities essential to the day-to-day operations for the school district's 22,500 enrolled students. Replacement stock for these 3 facilities is not readily available and the acquisition of land, architectural design and construction of new facilities would require a significant outlay of time (estimated at 8 years) and money. Due to the complexity of the property type, temporary facilities may need to be utilized in the interim.

##### *The Boys and Girls Club of Victor Valley (17537 Montezuma Street, Adelanto)*

All of the build alternatives would require full acquisition of this 3-acre property. This facility provides year-round and after school social and recreational programs to disadvantaged youth in the region. It is anticipated that finding a suitable replacement property in a location that serves the target audience may be a challenge.

#### *Variation E*

##### *Industrial/manufacturing properties in Adelanto*

All of the build alternatives that include Variation E have the potential to impact several companies in Adelanto that handle hazardous chemicals (DRIR 2014). The properties include Assessor's Parcel Number (APN): 0459461730000, 0456461740000, and 0459461750000, which are owned and operated by USA Services. APN: 0459461340000 and 0459461280000 are owned and operated by the

APEX Bulk Transportation Company and produce and/or transport various materials such as waste byproducts, borax, manganese, ore, and limestone. It may be difficult to relocate with challenging zoning and operational requirements.

*Palmdale Rail Option 1*

*Industrial properties in Palmdale*

Allen Recycling, Lusk Machine Products, and 3 other industrial properties would be impacted by rail option #1. The heavy machinery and equipment associated with these facilities would require more time and resources for relocation than a typical commercial property.

*Palmdale Rail Option 7*

*Government properties in Palmdale*

Partial acquisition of several government facilities would be required for rail option #7. These include: a portion of the parking lot at the Lockheed Martin facility, located on a federally owned parcel at Sierra Highway and Lockheed Way; the Palmdale Transportation Center/Metrolink Station located at Sierra Highway and Technology Drive; a water test center/utility owned by the City of Palmdale, located at the corner of Rancho Vista Boulevard (Avenue P) and 20<sup>th</sup> Street; and two parking lots owned by the City of Palmdale located at Sierra Highway and Technology Drive.

***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

Avoidance and minimization measures shall include the following:

- COM-1:** Provide relocation assistance and counseling to displaced persons and businesses in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation for displaced persons and businesses. All eligible displacees will be provided moving expenses. All benefits and services will be provided equitably to all relocatees without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origins, and disability as specified under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- COM-2:** Provide ROW agents who are bilingual or have translators to assist with the diverse population within the area during the relocation process.
- COM-3:** Provide replacement areas, to the extent possible, that are homogenous to the displacement areas and are comparable in terms of amenities, public utilities, and accessibility to public services, transportation, and shopping.
- COM-4:** Utilize the Last Resort Housing Program, if necessary, to relocate residential households within the Los Angeles or San Bernardino County area.

- COM-5:** Establish a designated office to assist displacees during the relocation process.
- COM-6:** Construct replacement facilities, when possible, before demolishing displaced facilities.
- COM-7:** As part of the project design, provide landscape and streetscape improvements in the displacement areas and the remaining areas adjacent to the new corridor as project compatibility features following extensive and collaborative community involvement and context-sensitive solution approaches.
- COM-8:** Give special attention to the three Palmdale School District properties, if acquired, to ensure an effective acquisition and relocation. This will include, but not be limited to, hiring an architect to create plans for construction of the new facilities, making offers to purchase neighboring vacant land on which to place the new buildings, negotiating a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for all parties (i.e. State, property owner, contractor) in securing a temporary replacement property due to insufficient lead time, and providing sufficient personnel to oversee the entire relocation process.
- COM-9:** Provide additional lead-time for the relocation process for the handling of all industrial and manufacturing businesses affected by the project. Lead time will be required to assess the environmental condition of these properties and secure suitable replacement properties.

### **3.1.4.3 Economic Considerations**

#### ***Affected Environment***

The information presented in this section was obtained from the HDC CIA (September 2014). All pertinent data can be found in the CIA report.

#### ***Employment***

For the Antelope Valley Area the major employment centers are the Antelope Valley Mall, Air Force Plant 42, and Edwards Air Force Base (EAFB). Together, these centers employ 29,644 employees, or 25 percent of the Antelope Valley Area labor force population. The aerospace industry is represented by Scaled Composites, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman. Two military bases are within the Greater Antelope Valley; the EAFB located north of Lancaster near the border of Kern and Los Angeles counties, and the China Lake Naval Reserve near Ridgecrest Street. EAFB is located within this regional study area and has slightly more than 10,610 employees, of whom 80 percent are civilians. Lancaster and Palmdale also have several business and industrial parks, including Fox Field Industrial Corridor (5,000 acres) in Lancaster and Palmdale Trade & Commerce Center (746 acres) in Palmdale.

For the Victor Valley area, the major employment centers are the SCLA (located on the former GAFB), the Wal-Mart Distribution Center, and Apple Valley Unified School District. There is also a large industrial base in Victor Valley due to the availability and relatively affordable prices of land. SCLA employs 2,073 people, Apple Valley Unified School District employs 1,705 people, and the Wal-Mart distribution center employs 1,100 people. Together, these employment centers account for 6 percent of the labor force population.

Based on the report published by California Employment Development Department (EDD) in 2011, the unemployment rate for both areas has increased significantly over the past 4 years, with the largest increase occurring since 2000. The 2010 unemployment rates for both the Antelope Valley area (15.0 percent) and Victor Valley area (13.9 percent) are higher than the State of California's (12.4 percent). Los Angeles County and San Bernardino County have 2010 unemployment rates of 12.6 and 14.2 percent, respectively. For the Antelope Valley area, the community with the lowest unemployment rate has historically been Acton, with the highest being Lake Los Angeles. For the Victor Valley area, the community of Mountain View Acres has historically had the lowest unemployment rate, with Adelanto having the highest. The California EDD does not have unemployment information at the census tract level, and unemployment rates can only be summarized for the Antelope Valley and Victor Valley areas accordingly.

#### *Per Capita Income*

The U.S. Census Bureau derives per capita income by dividing the total income of all people 15 years old and over in a geographic area by the total population in the area, including people less than 15 years of age. Per capita income is typically reported in units of currency per year and is often used as a measurement to determine the wealth of a selected population. The per capita income for the United States in 2000 was \$21,893. The 2010 U.S. Census has not yet released per capita income data for the census tracts located in the project study area.

Based on the U.S. Census 2000, the project study area per capita income was \$15,501, compared to \$16,879 and \$16,162 in Antelope Valley and Victor Valley areas, respectively.

#### *Labor Force Characteristics*

2010 U.S. Census information on labor force characteristics has not yet been released for the census tracts located in the project study area. According to the 2000 Census, the Antelope Valley area had a population of 290,406, with a labor force of 119,608 persons, which was approximately 67 percent larger than the Victor Valley area.

#### *Business Activity and Fiscal Conditions*

As described in the land use section, a variety of residential, industrial, agricultural, and commercial land uses are found within the project study area. Businesses are primarily concentrated at the west and east ends of the project study area, with few business located in the center portion. In Palmdale, there are several establishments,

smaller businesses, and retail shops located within the project study area near the intersections of SR-14/Technology Drive and 30<sup>th</sup> Street/Avenue Q, and along Palmdale Boulevard. Near the eastern portion of the project study area, most business activity occurs along SR-18 within the city limits of Victorville and Apple Valley. Other major businesses exist around SCLA in Victorville, as well as along US 395 and Air Expressway.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau Economic data for 2007, the highest concentration of business establishments, with the highest sales and employees, is in the area of retail trades for the cities of Lancaster, Palmdale, and Victorville. The highest concentration for Adelanto is in the area of manufacturing. Palmdale has the highest concentration of manufacturing establishments, followed by Victorville. Health care and social assistance employment has its highest concentration in Lancaster, followed by Victorville. Lancaster has by far the highest concentration of wholesale trade.

Property taxes are levied on the assessed value of a privately owned property. Property taxes for the parcels that lie within the boundaries of the affected cities are collected by the County of Los Angeles or the County of San Bernardino, as appropriate, and a percentage is turned back over to the respective city. Of the taxes collected through the property tax system, the public school system receives the largest portion, with the remainder going to local government agencies and special districts.

Based on the projected property taxes for fiscal years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 of cities and counties within the study area, property tax dropped in fiscal year 2012-2013 in all of the study area cities and county areas except in Adelanto and Apple Valley. However, the median home sale price in fiscal year 2009-2010 shifted direction to increase at various rates in all of the cities within the project area except for Lancaster. The trend for home sale prices, as presented in SCAG's profile reports for cities and communities within the study area, shows that prices reached a level that is equivalent to the early 2000s in the fiscal year 2009-2010.

## ***Environmental Consequences***

### ***No Build Alternative***

The No Build Alternative includes projects that are planned and included in the current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). These projects consist of improvements of the existing facilities, and most likely will not affect access or cause any change to the regional and local economic conditions because such impacts under the No Build Alternative are not anticipated. Because there would be no project construction, no impacts associated with employment and income, business activities, and fiscal conditions within the project study area would occur. However, in absence of the proposed HDC Project, the east-west transportation linkages would not be enhanced; thus, the economic growth and interregional/intraregional trade and goods movement may not be improved as planned.

## *Build Alternatives*

### *Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives*

This alternative would improve mobility at the local and regional levels, and provide safer travel conditions. Several new interchanges would be constructed as part of this alternative. The interchanges would maintain access points of the present roadway system; however, the proposed interchanges would provide improved facilities that enhance mobility and connectivity along the corridor. The improved mobility, connectivity, and safety conditions are expected to have a positive impact on the overall economic conditions at the local and regional levels. Specifically, access between the Palmdale Regional Airport on one side, and SCLA and I-15 in Victorville on the other side, would be improved by providing a direct connection between the two areas. The impact is considered beneficial because it would improve mobility and connectivity between the two airport facilities.

Design variations to this alternative avoid and minimize impacts to various businesses, including the airport facilities and land designated for future airport facility development. The variations also avoid and minimize impacts to farmland and associated businesses. According to the DRIR (2014) prepared for this project, several commercial, industrial, and agricultural establishments would be acquired to provide the needed ROW for construction of the project. The DRIR (2014) indicates that a sufficient number of properties are available for lease, purchase, and development within similar locations in the communities where these businesses are located. These impacted businesses would be provided compensation and relocation assistance as required by law. As a result, it is not anticipated that the relocation of businesses would have negative impacts on the regional economy. Furthermore, the construction-related employment and procurement associated with the project would have a positive incremental gain to the local and regional economy.

For the Freeway/Tollway alternative, sections of the facility that are outside the city limits of Palmdale and Victorville would operate as a tollway. Details of this operating feature are still being evaluated as part of the ongoing public-private partnership (PPP) analysis. Direct impacts on business development may vary depending on the operational features of the tollway, but variations from the main alignment are not expected to be substantial. It is anticipated that this alternative would have similar impacts on the economy at the local and regional levels as those of the Freeway/Expressway alternative.

### *Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway with HSR Alternatives*

This alternative includes an HSR element with one new rail station in Palmdale. Rail service would contribute further to regional and interregional connectivity. The HSR within the project area would eventually connect the project area with the northern and southern regions of the state, and with Las Vegas and Nevada through the XpressWest. Major transportation centers would be constructed in Palmdale and Victorville to accommodate highway and HSR travel, as well as transit and nonmotorized travel. This alternative would create opportunities for growth of the

local and regional economy through potential jobs created as a result of the increased development and growth that may occur with expanded mobility and connectivity.

### *Employment and Income*

#### All Build Alternatives

Major employers in the region include several military bases, aerospace industries, logistic airports and distribution centers, and other business and industrial parks. All project alternatives would improve mobility and enhance goods movement, and would increase the viability of the project area as a base for such economic activities. All of the build alternatives include an element of the freeway/expressway, freeway/tollway, and/or HSR, in which either one of these elements, per the purpose and need of the project, would improve access and connectivity among transportation systems. The HDC Project build alternatives would construct freeway-to-freeway “system” interchanges at I-15 and SR-14, local “service” interchanges at north–south crossings of arterial streets, grade separations (i.e., overcrossings or undercrossings) of local streets having no freeway access, and at-grade, traffic signal-controlled intersections along the expressway portion of the project east of Dale Evans Parkway. The locations of the interchanges, grade separations proposed for initial construction, and at-grade signalized intersections currently proposed as part of the HDC build alternatives are illustrated in Figure 3.1.6-5 in Chapter 2 (Project Alternatives).

Construction of the HDC Freeway/Expressway or Freeway/Tollway, with or without HSR in the median, would potentially sever many primarily north–south running local roads that are planned for future development. Some of these restrictions may temporarily slow development of vacant parcel sites or hamper access to current industrial and other business operations, and hence employment opportunities, but this appears to be unlikely the case. For the most part, these severed roads are “paper streets,” appearing on tract maps and which are located in relatively undeveloped areas between Palmdale and Victorville. Local roads running parallel to the HDC would provide access to north–south roads identified for interchanges or grade separations. A controlled-access Freeway/Tollway would have fewer access points with the local roadway network. The HDC would include interchanges to service local access needs will be located at intervals of 1 to 5 miles between SR-14 in Los Angeles County and approximately 3 miles east of I-15 in San Bernardino County. As roundabouts have become more popular with communities as a context sensitive solution, Caltrans would reserve the future right of way to design and build roundabouts at a number of on-off ramp interchange locations, including Longview Road/140<sup>th</sup> Street; 170<sup>th</sup> Street; 210<sup>th</sup> Street; 240<sup>th</sup> Street; Oasis Road; Sheep Creek Road; Caughlin Road; Koala Road; and Choco Road.

If the Freeway/Tollway alternative were to be implemented, some redistribution of traffic is anticipated to occur, though that traffic would be expected to go on the closest east-west major parallel arterial rather than into more circuitous routes into neighborhoods.

Final designs would be optimized after extensive community involvement with the objective of providing the appropriate access points throughout the Freeway/Tollway segment, while maintaining the overall integrity of the system. Input from the affected communities will also be used to assist in identifying other specific mitigation measures.

### *Business Activity and Fiscal Conditions*

#### *Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway Alternatives*

The project alignment is located approximately 1 to 2 miles north of Palmdale Boulevard in Palmdale, and SR-18 in Victorville and Apple Valley. Several small businesses, such as restaurants, gas stations, convenience stores, and offices, are located along these two major local roads. There is the potential that a change in traffic patterns as a result of construction of the new facility would affect businesses along these local roadways by reducing their proximity and visibility to users.

Impacts associated with a reduction in pass-by vehicular traffic can vary according to the type of business involved. A destination business is often unaffected or in some cases even positively affected by reduced through traffic, whereas a convenience or impulse business relies to a greater degree on pass-by traffic (i.e., drivers stopping at a business on their way to another primary destination); therefore, it may be more adversely affected. For example, according to the Institute of Transportation Engineers, *Trip Generation Handbook*, pass-by traffic generates, on average, only 36 percent of business activity of a supermarket, while a fast-food restaurant with a drive-up window may derive up to almost half of its business from pass-by traffic. In contrast, a tire store draws only about 25 percent of its customers from pass-by traffic. In other words, some purchases are made somewhat on impulse and others are more deliberate; therefore, some types of businesses are more likely to be impacted by changes in proximity and visibility. The potential loss of business from pass-by drivers who are less likely to patronize a particular establishment, because it is no longer as easy a stopping point or is no longer visible, cannot be precisely quantified in advance; however, sufficient studies have been conducted to allow for some generalizations.

Businesses that largely cater to nearby residents, such as drug store pharmacies, banks, and grocery stores, are generally not impacted by a diversion of traffic and, in fact, some studies indicate for some such businesses, economic activity may even improve. This would also generally be true of medical services, legal services, and industrial and warehouse operations.

The potential impact is not expected to be substantial because the additional 1 to 2 miles to the businesses from the proposed HDC would not be so great an inconvenience for travelers needing to access various available services. In addition, the project would improve and maintain accessibility to these businesses by the construction of several interchanges that are directly connected to the existing roadway system. Improving traffic circulation and level of service on the local roads by providing an alternative route for intra-regional and long-distance travelers, including trucks, would also

encourage nearby residents to utilize the local roads for their business trips because of reduced congestion and improved traffic conditions. Additional measures, such as placing informational signs at strategic locations on the new facilities, would encourage non-local traffic to utilize local businesses. Such businesses could include hotels/motels, restaurants, gas stations, and convenience stores.

For the Freeway/Tollway alternative, sections of the facility that are outside the city limits of Palmdale and Victorville would operate as a tollway. Depending on the operation features of the tollway, direct impact on business development of the Freeway/Tollway alternative may vary slightly. Details of the operating features are still being evaluated as part of the ongoing public-private partnership (PPP) analysis. Direct impacts on business development may vary depending on the operational features of the tollway, but variations from the main alignment are not expected to be substantial. It is not highly likely that a business enterprise will make a decision on where to place its facilities on the presence or absence of a tollway, nor are most employees likely to eschew an employment opportunity if it meant a tollway was part of the transportation corridor route needed to get to their job.

One effect of instituting a tollway system may be a diversion of passenger car and truck traffic off of the roadway prior to entering the tolled facility and onto the nearby local roadway system to avoid paying tolls. This would have the potential effect of creating more pass-by traffic for local businesses. A tollway may also impact business access by physically preventing vehicles from getting off (or on) at certain locations because of the need to limit the entrance/exit points of the facility to maintain efficiencies. Research studies sponsored by FHWA have shown the overall levels of retail sales in a community were not significantly affected by introduction of a new transportation corridor, nor did businesses which depend on local customers or repeat customers tend to experience a drop off in economic activity. It is anticipated therefore that the Freeway/Tollway alternative would have similar impacts on the economy at the local and regional levels as those of the Freeway/Expressway alternative.

Implementation of the project alternatives is estimated to displace 34 to 36 commercial, industrial, nonprofit, and agricultural business establishments. Proposed Variation E to the project alignment, which is located near Victorville, is planned to avoid Victorville Federal Correctional Facility. This alignment variation would impact 43 business establishments. It is estimated that this project would affect almost 18 percent of agricultural land use in the project area. Other southern variations of this alternative are proposed to avoid impacts to existing businesses, including airports in Palmdale and Victorville and associated land uses, as well as some agricultural business and dairy facilities. Impacts due to partial acquisition that affects business parking and other facilities would be compensated by providing replacement properties adequate for the intended use.

Direct impacts to businesses would be addressed by providing relocation and compensation benefits as required by law. In this alternative, according to the DRIR (2014) prepared for this project, there are sufficient available replacement locations

within the city limits for commercial, industrial, and agricultural properties affected by ROW requirements for all of the build alternatives; therefore, no direct loss of business and tax revenue generation to the cities within the project study area cities or Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties would be expected as a result of the project. A *National Business Relocation Study* sponsored by FHWA (2002), found that about 18 percent of business properties in California were not re-established after displacement due to a perceived financial hardship and another 22 percent of those businesses that were relocated closed within the first two years of operation, though the cause was not always clearly established. Relocation impacts, particularly financial impacts, tend to be more of a concern for small family-owned businesses, or businesses that cater to a specific clientele within the study area and usually not the larger industrial enterprises such as the ones more likely to be affected by the HDC project. Therefore, though the DRIR (2014) indicated an adequate supply of comparable commercial and industrial properties is available for lease and purchase in the displacement/replacement area, one can conclude it is likely that some percentage of the properties will likely not be contributing to the local tax base following HDC project implementation.

It is not anticipated that the displacement and relocation of residential properties or businesses under any of the alternatives would have substantial impacts on the local tax base and fiscal conditions for the communities within the project area.

When properties are permanently acquired for new ROW, the property tax base is reduced. The removal of residences and business operations and the acquisition of ROW for the proposed action under any of the build alternatives would result in the loss of property tax revenue for the affected cities and two counties. These are considered minor in the context of overall revenue collection. As every displaced residential property will be accommodated through the Relocation Assistance Program, and residents will be provided decent, safe and sanitary and comparable housing, it is not anticipated there would be any permanent loss of property taxes to state or local county government revenue from residential displacements. However, though adequate housing stock exists in each community, prospective displacees could move from one city jurisdiction to another.

The fiscal impacts due to full acquisitions of nonresidential properties to Palmdale, Los Angeles County, and the Town of Apple Valley in San Bernardino County would be adverse, but small, based on the relatively minor amounts of full acquisitions of nonresidential properties and the wide distribution of revenue efforts among agencies. Based on the current assessed value of the private properties that would likely be fully acquired under the Freeway/Expressway alternative, assessed valuations would be reduced by \$7.6 million in Palmdale, and \$350,000 in Apple Valley. These reductions in assessed valuation would result in a total loss of \$324,000 in annual combined property tax revenue. These numbers are preliminary and individual property appraisals will be conducted by Caltrans Right-of-Way team once a preferred alignment is chosen. These are a worst case scenario, as most properties are expected to be re-established within their respective city or unincorporated county area.

It is anticipated that the proposed Variations to the main corridor of the Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway alternatives would result in some different impacts on businesses and fiscal conditions. Variation A would necessitate acquisition of a salvage yard at 2235 E Avenue in Palmdale. Variation E would involve full acquisitions of five additional industrial properties located in Adelanto: USA Services, Inc., Robertson Ready Mix Co., Apex Bulk Commodities, Holliday Rock Co., and Cal-Silica. Based on the estimated assessed value of the properties, Variation E would reduce assessed valuations by about \$3 million, and would result in the total loss of approximately \$8,000 in tax revenue for Adelanto were these businesses not to be re-established.

#### *Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway with HSR Alternatives*

Fiscal impacts from the alternatives with HSR would in general be similar to the alternative without HSR as described above, with some additional impact arising from the proposed rail connection in Palmdale (including Option 1 and Option 7) and Victorville, as discussed below.

#### *Rail Option 1*

Under HSR Option 1, there would be 18 nonresidential parcel impacts including various commercial businesses, ranging from auto repair to storage facilities and industrial companies, including Allen Recycling, Lusk Machine Products, and 3 other industrial buildings and structures in Palmdale.

#### *Rail Option 7*

Option 7 would involve a full right of way acquisition from United Refrigeration in Palmdale and possibly one other industrial parcel, so compared to Option 1, would have less of an overall fiscal impact to the city.

It is anticipated that the HSR element associated with this alternative, as well as the two new stations in Palmdale and Victorville, would create opportunities for the establishment of additional businesses that would serve users of the two station facilities. These businesses would be developed in addition to the existing businesses and are not anticipated to replace any existing businesses. Rail stations generate substantial traffic and parking demand independent of surrounding land uses because they serve as transportation hubs for the greater region. Research studies sponsored by the Transportation Research Board and American Public Transportation Association, conducted on other major rail infrastructure projects seem to indicate that this project would be a catalyst for additional private development investment and increased economic opportunity and market demand as the areas around station locations become attractive for development. Visitor-serving uses, including facilities for lodging and restaurant establishments, as well as retail and commercial space for shops, are expected to be generated in areas close to new stations. The two station areas in Palmdale and Victorville would have a positive overall effect on property values and tax revenue.

### Common to All Alternatives

All of the build alternatives (main alignment, common area) would also affect sales tax revenues received by the City of Palmdale and Los Angeles County, although these effects are expected to be negligible and most of the nonresidential parcels that would be affected by the HDC project are not involved in direct (taxable) sales. The proposed improvements in the main alignment would require the relocation of three commercial properties in Palmdale: a fast food restaurant, a florist shop and a bingo supply wholesaler. Of the three properties, only the fast food restaurant (Tommy Burger) in Palmdale would appear to generate substantial sales tax revenue from direct sales of goods and services. Based on average sales by limited-service eating places as reported in the 2012 U.S. Economic Census, the sales tax lost to the City of Palmdale through the displacement of this business would probably not exceed \$12,000. In addition, the florist shop likely does not contribute more than \$2,500 in sales tax. It is not known how much the bingo supplier is likely to contribute in local sales tax. A propane supplier in the Town of Apple Valley, also likely contributes less than \$10,000 in local sales tax.

As a result, though the tax rolls would see a reduction, and in certain jurisdictions as discussed above, there would be some further revenues lost to jurisdictions due to sales tax loss, the total amount of anticipated combined assessed value loss associated with any of the build alternatives would be imperceptible on local government revenues.

Improving mobility and accessibility, however, would advance conditions for growth of existing businesses and foster the establishment of new businesses by allowing greater access to such establishments, which would in turn improve the tax base and overall fiscal conditions. In addition, it is anticipated that overall property values would be increased as a result of the improved economic conditions in general, but specifically the increase would occur within the economic sphere of influence or in close proximity of the proposed interchanges. The sphere of influence is considered to be within 2 miles for commercial developments and 5 miles for residential developments (see Section 3.1.2, Growth). It is anticipated that by improving mobility and overall regional economic viability of the region, overall impacts on businesses and fiscal conditions in the area would be positive as a result of this alternative.

### ***Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures***

The following mitigation measures would be implemented to minimize economic related impacts:

- COM-10:** Involve low-income and minority status populations, through public outreach efforts, throughout the various phases of the project to address their concerns and needs.
- COM-11:** Prepare staging plan that will ensure that access to homes and businesses, in addition to parking spaces, is available at all times with minimum disruption of traffic flow and increase in delays.

- COM-12:** Design a public campaign through which the public is well advised of construction plans that may have impacts on traffic.
- COM-13:** Coordinate with the affected utility companies during the final design phase of the project to ensure that services to homes, community facilities, and businesses are not interrupted.
- COM-14:** Prepare a Comprehensive Transportation Management Plan (TMP) to minimize traffic inconveniences due to construction activities. (Refer to CI-T-1 to CI-T-2 in Section 3.6, Construction Impact, Traffic and Transportation/Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities)
- COM-15:** Conform to all Caltrans construction required measures for dust control and air pollution control. (Refer to CI-AQ-1 to CI-AQ-3 in Section 3.6, Construction Impacts, Air Quality.)
- COM-16:** Implement sound-control measures to minimize noise impacts during construction. (Refer to CI-NOI-1 to CI-NOI-8 in Section 3.6, Construction Impacts, Noise.)
- COM-17:** Provide business information signage at appropriate locations on the new facility, if found necessary.

In addition, the following measure previously listed is also applicable.

- COM-1:** Provide relocation assistance and counseling to displaced persons and businesses in accordance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Policies Act, as amended, to ensure adequate relocation for displaced persons and businesses. All eligible displacees will be provided moving expenses. All benefits and services will be provided equitably to all relocatees without regard to race, color, religion, age, national origins, and disability as specified under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

#### **3.1.4.4 Environmental Justice**

##### ***Regulatory Setting***

All projects involving a federal action (funding, permit, or land) must comply with Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, signed by President William J. Clinton on February 11, 1994. This EO directs federal agencies to take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of minority and low-income populations to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law. Low income is defined based on the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. For 2012, this was \$23,050 for a family of four.

All considerations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes have also been included in this project. Caltrans’ commitment to upholding the mandates of Title VI is evidenced by its Title VI Policy Statement, signed by the Director, which can be found in Appendix C of this document.

**Affected Environment**

An analysis of environmental justice was included in the Draft HDC CIA (August 2014). The Draft HDC CIA determined the presence of low-income and minority populations through the use of U.S. Census of Population and Housing data, and through field observations. Demographic data was obtained for the various block groups within the study area. Census data for the block groups were compared to the local city and countywide demographics to help determine where disproportionate impacts on low-income and minority residents may occur. Minority individuals, as defined by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), include members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black; or Hispanic.

*Palmdale, Unincorporated Los Angeles County, Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley Minority Populations*

Table 3.1.4-19 summarizes the combined percentages of minority populations within the study area and communities compared to their respective city and county (see additional tables with demographic composition breakdowns in Section 3.1.4.1). Based on the table, a high percentage of minority populations exist within the study area; however, in comparison to the overall local city demographics and dual countywide data for minority populations, the share of minorities within the study area is fairly representative of the overall counties and cities, and the differences in percentage numbers are not substantively different, with the exception of Palmdale, where there is a higher percentage of minorities compared to the other local jurisdictions and the overall county averages. Data on the exact location of minority populations is not provided by the U.S. Census Bureau or collected by any local jurisdictions in the study area at a scale in which parcels can be specifically identified.

**Table 3.1.4-19 Summary of Minority Population Demographics**

Location	Total Minority Population		
	Study Area	City/Town	Los Angeles County
Palmdale	77%	74%	71%
Unincorporated Los Angeles County	69%	N/A	71%
	Victor Valley Study Area	City/Town	San Bernardino County
Adelanto	61%	80%	64%
Victorville	61%	68%	64%
Apple Valley	61%	41%	64%

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

*Palmdale, Unincorporated Los Angeles County, Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley Low-Income Populations*

Table 3.1.4-20 summarizes the percentage of low-income populations within the study area and communities compared to their respective city and county (see additional tables with breakdowns by income level in Section 3.1.4.1). As seen in the table below, the levels of low-income populations within the study area were consistently greater in comparison to the overall counties and cities, with the exception of Adelanto. Adelanto was the only jurisdiction in which the project study area located within Adelanto displayed a lower percentage of low-income populations in comparison to the overall city.

**Table 3.1.4-20 Total Low-Income/Poverty Status Population Demographics**

Location	Low-Income Status Population		
	Study Area	City/Town	Los Angeles County
Palmdale	29%	19%	18%
Unincorporated Los Angeles County	25%	N/A	18%
	Victor Valley Study Area	City/Town	San Bernardino County
Adelanto	22%	26%	15%
Victorville	22%	19%	15%
Apple Valley	22%	18%	15%

Source: High Desert Corridor Community Impact Assessment, 2014.

**Environmental Consequences**

As detailed in the description of the affected environment, the percentages of minority populations in the study area largely mirror that of the larger county areas. The discussion of environmental justice consequences that follows has been prepared in accordance with the applicable guidance for addressing environmental justice, including the U.S. DOT Executive Order 5610.2 (USDOT 1997; 2012), FHWA Order 6640.23 (FHWA 1998), FHWA Western Resource Center Interim Guidance (1999), and the Caltrans Environmental Handbook Volume 4 (Community Impact Assessment). Consistent with this guidance, this analysis determines if any disproportionately high and adverse effects from any of the HDC alternatives would be predominately borne by a minority or low-income populations, or would be appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude to minority or low-income populations compared to the effects on non-minority or non-low-income populations.

The analysis below examines the ways in which impacts associated with the various alternatives, including the No Build Alternative, may affect minority and low-income populations, and a determination is then made whether any alternative results in disproportionately high and adverse effects.

### *No Build Alternative*

Given the absence of new transportation infrastructure, certain impacts would be less substantial than the effects described below for the build alternatives; however, certain adverse effects on minority or low-income populations in the study area would arise as a result of transportation needs left unmet by the No Build Alternative. These effects would include direct impacts and indirect effects that are typically caused by traffic congestion and impaired mobility, longer travel times on local roadways, and increased air pollution and noise. The economic benefits associated with implementation of the HDC would also not be realized. Because these effects would not be concentrated in any particular location, minority and low-income and non-minority and non-low-income populations would be affected. Therefore, impacts associated with the No Build Alternative would not be predominantly borne by a minority or low-income population, nor would these impacts be appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than those experienced by non-minority or non-low-income populations.

### *Build Alternatives*

Although minority populations exist within the project area, the overall percentage of total minority populations within the greater Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties in comparison to the percentage of total minority populations within the communities located within the project area is similar. Based on the analysis contained in the various chapters within this EIR/EIS, each of the HDC Build Alternatives would impact some members of minority and low-income population groups, as they would non-environmental justice populations, resulting from displacements/relocations, air quality violations of  $PM_{10}$ , noise impacts, and changes in visual/aesthetics.

Because the demographics are similar to the county averages, the HDC Project is not expected to disproportionately affect a particular high minority population.

Table 3.1.4-20 shows low-income/poverty status populations exist within the project area, and when compared to the respective county averages, the project area generally exhibits a higher percentage.

Measures to assist low-income/poverty status populations that may potentially be affected by the proposed project are listed under the *Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures* section.

Although the effects of the project would occur in an area having a population that is largely minority and low-income, these effects cannot reasonably be considered disproportionately high and adverse under the circumstances. Noise, visual, and air quality impacts associated with the various build alternatives would affect area residents along the entire 63-mile corridor length, not solely the areas with minority and low-income populations. Because these impacts would be distributed similarly throughout the corridor, impacts would not fall disproportionately on low-income and minority populations. All Census block groups in the project study area, except 9102.01, 9101.01, 9100.01, 9800.04, 9105.02, and 9106.01, are composed of

substantial portions of minority and low-income populations; however, only a relatively small linear portion of the proposed HDC Project would actually be located within the direct impact area, and most of the residents within the Census block groups through which the project would traverse are not likely to be affected by the proposed HDC Project. Due to the small population within each block group (9102.01, 9101.01, 9100.01, 9800.04, 9105.02, and 9106.01), encompassed within a rather large geographical size, and often one that is rural in character, the minority and low-income populations are not highly concentrated in a central location but are dispersed throughout the area of the Census block groups.

With the exception of those properties that may require relocation (a list of all the properties potentially displaced appears in Appendix I), most of the residences dispersed throughout these large block groups are located far from the proposed HDC Project alignments and would not be affected any more so than the other community members. As indicated in Section 3.1.4.2, Relocations and Acquisitions, the difference between the HDC Freeway/Expressway and Freeway/Tollway alternatives with Variations is narrow and varies only from a range of 27 to 29 residential units in need of full acquisition, and between a narrow range of 35 to 43 nonresidential units for full acquisition (the Rail Connection Option 7 would require considerably more residential acquisitions). Effects on neighborhood integrity and community cohesion would be generally similar for the community populations.

As it would for other community members who are not members of the minority or low-income population groups, the HDC Project build alternatives would also provide benefits for the minority and low-income populations within the study area. Goals of the project are to improve travel safety and reliability in the High Desert region, improve traffic operations, and provide improved access and connectivity to regional transportation facilities, including airports and future passenger rail systems. These benefits would be shared among all of the study area populations.

#### Freeway/Expressway Alternative

Under this alternative, impacts to minority and low-income/poverty status populations would be minimal. As discussed above, the demographics of minority and low-income populations in the area in comparison to the two counties are similar. In Palmdale, most of the full-property residential displacements which are anticipated are located on Calle Street/10<sup>th</sup> Street East. Outside the city limits, but houses on Palmdale Blvd., 170<sup>th</sup> Street East, and East Avenue Q12 would also be taken under any of the alternatives. Most of the other potential full single family residential acquisitions occurring in a concentrated neighborhood area would occur in the Town of Apple Valley, on Waalew Road and Cuyama Road. The neighborhoods from which right-of-way acquisitions would occur consist of both minority/low-income and non-minority/non-low-income populations. Impacts would not result in a deterioration of the overall neighborhood. Most of the other potential displacements for the Freeway/Expressway alternative, overall, however, are widely distributed and located in unincorporated areas on semi-rural parcels and individual streets that are not part of any established neighborhoods (See Appendix I for a table of the affected properties subject to relocation).

The proposed improvements would require the relocation of three commercial properties in Palmdale, a fast food restaurant, a florist shop and a bingo supply wholesaler. There are also several nonprofit properties slated for full right-of-way acquisition, with the DRIR indicating these provide services that include media services, equipment storage, a warehouse, and a fuel pumping station. Industrial and manufacturing parcels contain warehouses and garages. None of these enterprises were specifically identified as being minority-owned by the Caltrans Revised DRIR (August 2014). Nor is there evidence to suggest that these businesses have any particular connection to a minority community or provide employment, goods, and/or services uniquely important to a particular minority population group. However, the Boys and Girls Club of Victor Valley, situated on a three-acre parcel in Adelanto (as discussed in Section 3.1.4.2) would be acquired under this and all project Build Alternatives, and as it primarily serves the needs of the area's youth of minority populations and low-income households, should be considered a significant community resource. According to the DRIR, adequate replacement properties are available for all relocations under each of the Alternatives.

The effects of increased noise and changes in visual character are not confined to limited areas but rather dispersed over the length of the project and are not in themselves expected to affect the overall character of the environmental justice areas. The project's Noise Study (see Section 3.2.7) indicated that, other than for single family residences, a church (Unity Church of Antelope Valley) and a school (Palmdale Learning Plaza School), both located in Palmdale, were sensitive receptors and would be eligible for sound abatement in terms of construction of soundwalls. Based on available online research, while the church does not appear to serve a predominantly minority population among its constituent members, the school, with an interdisciplinary, multi-cultural approach to learning, does appear to have a student body that reflects the largely diverse local demographic base.

Each Build Alternative was analyzed to assess the degree of potential project effects to existing visual features. In many areas, construction of the HDC project would occur within existing roads rights-of-way or on rural parcels and would have minimal to moderate effects on current viewer experiences. In some instances, because of construction of soundwalls, bridges, grade separations, and other structures, or the location of the facility into open or rural adjacent areas that create a more urban experience, some people would experience a higher degree of visual effect or aesthetic impact as certain open views of landscape vistas would be blocked or diminished. These impacts would be distributed along the length of the corridor and, as a result, would not be experienced disproportionately among low-income or minority populations. The visual analysis concluded that the introduction of retaining walls, soundwall barriers, and new bridges would have a moderate visual effect on residents living adjacent to the corridor, which statistically include a large percentage of minority and/or low-income household populations. Retaining walls and noise barriers would shield residences from the transportation facility, lessening its visual impacts. Further discussion of visual/aesthetic resources is provided in the Visual/Aesthetics Section, 3.1.7.

Mitigation measures have been developed to reduce impacts identified above. However, alternatives that would completely avoid or completely eliminate adverse effects on the low-income and minority populations are not likely practicable as it is not possible to route either the Freeway/Expressway or the Freeway/Tollway alternative completely around these populations because the demographics in the project area are similar to the county averages and other people meeting a similar demographic profile would likely experience the project impacts. That is, for the project to meet the purpose the transportation system must provide for effective and efficient east-west movement between Palmdale and Victorville/Apple Valley. In looking at the U.S. Census data, it becomes apparent that it is not possible to find census tracts that do not contain large percentages of minority and low-income populations because the entire area is comprised of people who meet the definition of environmental justice populations. In addition, impacts would be distributed along the length of the corridor and, as a result, would not be experienced disproportionately among low-income or minority populations. In addition, impacts would be distributed along the length of the corridor and, as a result, would not be experienced disproportionately among low-income or minority populations.

#### Freeway/Tollway Alternative

With the exception of potential economic impacts on low-income households, the Freeway/Tollway alternative would have the same effects as that of the Freeway/Expressway alternative discussed above because of the same physical project footprint upon which it would be built.

Impacts would be distributed along the entire length of the transportation corridor; therefore, impacts would not fall disproportionately on minority populations. However, the one distinction this alternative has compared to the Freeway/Expressway alternative is that the low-income/poverty status populations in the area may be impacted by an increased financial burden as a result of the tolling option that would be implemented under these alternatives.

Because a fare must be paid to utilize the tollway, financial access to a tolling facility is an issue that often emerges when such options are considered. To use the new tolled express lanes, tollway users would be required to pay for their travel. The segment in which tolling is being considered for implementation is located between 90<sup>th</sup> Street East in Palmdale and US 395 in Adelanto. The extent to which the tollway would affect low-income populations would vary depending on the final toll rate, which would change based on the congestion level at different times. As a result, these alternatives may affect low-income populations. By requiring a toll to utilize the facility, low-income/poverty status populations would be less able to afford the toll required and may need to utilize local arterial roads when commuting between Antelope Valley and Victor Valley. However, not only because travel options would continue to exist, but by absorbing some percentage of the traffic onto the new toll facility, those same people using the existing local road system would benefit from having less congestion on these general purpose roads than would be so without a toll facility.

Currently, there is no generally accepted understanding of the effects of tolling on transportation equity, and methodologies to measure such effects are not well established. Studies conducted on tolling in California showed that economically disadvantaged drivers use toll lanes, voluntarily and are not necessarily excluded, although more frequent use is often exhibited by higher-income drivers. The studies revealed that low-income drivers approved of the express toll concepts, similar to opinions of higher-income households. Case studies on two toll facilities – I-680 in the San Francisco Bay Area and SR-91 in southern California – revealed no substantive differences of opinion on tolling among members of the public based on their ethnic or income breakdown, nor was equity a critical issue identified by stakeholder focus groups or in surveys conducted for either tolling project. Most users, even those from higher-income households, choose the express lanes judiciously when they need to benefit most from bypassing reduced congestion. Legislation enables Metro and Caltrans to work together and in cooperation with a PPP to determine tolling programs. An Equity Assessment Analysis will be conducted during the design phase, and options for alternative purchasing of tolling transponders and other creative solutions will be considered prior to inauguration and construction of the tollway. Public involvement will be a cornerstone to future decision making concerning pricing. Therefore, impacts to minority populations would be minimal after avoidance and minimization measures are taken into account under this build alternative.

#### Freeway/Expressway with HSR Alternative

In addition to the impacts to environmental justice and low-income populations noted with the Freeway/Expressway alternative, this alternative, with the inclusion of the HSR feeder service, would result in greater impacts to minority populations under Rail Connection Option 7 because the total number of full acquisition of residential properties is higher. A tract of 20 residential houses within Palmdale would be displaced as a result of the proposed HSR alignment. While the U.S. Census does not allow a direct correlation of specific demographic or income data to be tied to any specific households or physical property addresses, given the percentage of minorities within the community, there is a high probability that approximately 15 of these 20 houses are the residences of members of minority population groups, particularly likely of Hispanic background. On the other hand, while Rail Connection Option 1 would not require right of way acquisition from residential properties, changes in community character are expected for the neighborhood surrounding the neighborhood, and the project might create an “island” effect for adjacent residences located on 10<sup>th</sup> Street East in Palmdale. Although conveniently located to transportation facilities, it is not likely that all residents would consider the noise, right-of-way fencing, and other activities associated with the HST operational traffic to be of mutual benefit. On the positive side, property that becomes more accessible to the HSR alignment may increase the property’s economic value.

Whereas Rail Connection Option 7 would have greater impacts on residential properties in terms of residential displacements, Rail Connection Option 1 would entail a greater impact on non-residential industrial and manufacturing properties both

in sheer number and size, but these would not be expected to have a similar impact on environmental justice population groups. Though employee composition details are not known, it is probable, however, that several of the industries that would be displaced also employ members of minority population groups.

#### Freeway/Tollway with HSR Alternative

Under this alternative for the HSR, as it is with the Freeway/Expressway Alternative described above, under Rail Connection Option 7, a considerably higher percentage of minority populations would likely be affected within Palmdale as a result of the 20 residential relocations (18 full acquisitions) for the proposed HSR alignment. This alternative would also affect low-income populations as a result of the proposed tollway facility.

#### *Outreach to Minority and Low-income Populations*

EO 12898 requires federal agencies to ensure effective public participation and access to information. Consequently, a key component of compliance with EO 12898 is outreach to the potentially affected minority and/or low-income population to discover issues of importance that may not otherwise be apparent. As Chapter 5 provides in detail, a concerted effort by Caltrans and Metro to conduct community outreach on the HDC Project was made to all population segments, which included the use of bilingual direct mail. Public meeting notices, in both English and Spanish, were posted at all of the public library kiosks in the project area. Scoping notices were also published in six local newspapers, including the region's major Spanish-language newspaper, *La Opinion*. In addition to the legally required scoping and public hearing meetings required as part of CEQA and NEPA, in which a Spanish-language interpreter was present, all informational handouts available at the meetings were provided in English and Spanish, and at some meetings, Korean. In addition, public information meetings/open houses were also held during preparation of the environmental documents. The community meetings were spread out geographically to make it convenient for stakeholders along the linear project study area to participate.

#### **Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures**

Based on the above discussion and analysis, neither the Freeway/Expressway alternative, or Freeway/Tollway alternative with variations or with the HSR Rail Connection Options 1 or 7 would cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations per EO 12898 regarding environmental justice.

Although the project would not cause disproportionately high and adverse effects on any minority or low-income populations, the following minimization measures and other mitigation measures proposed elsewhere in this environmental document would minimize impacts on all the local communities, including low-income and minority neighborhoods.

- COM-18:** An Equity Assessment Analysis will be conducted during final design. Depending on assessment results, implementation of an Equity Program to alleviate cost burdens on low-income commuters on the facility will be considered. If a tollway alternative is selected, low-income poverty status populations will be considered in decisions concerning toll pricing options.
- COM-19:** Incorporate community enhancement features such as parks, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities during the final design in order to minimize impacts and to add benefits for low-income populations.
- COM-20:** Additional collaboration with communities on aesthetics of the project facilities and noise mitigation measures should occur in final design in order to minimize and mitigate impacts to residential areas.
- COM-21:** During the relocation period, the Boys and Girls Club of Victor Valley should be able to continue to operate temporarily at their present location after acquisition by the State, under a lease agreement with the State. This would allow for continued operation until such time as a replacement site is located or until the property is actually required for construction of the High Desert Corridor Project.

In addition, the following measure listed earlier also applies.

- COM-10:** Involve low-income and minority status populations, through public outreach efforts, throughout the various phases of the project to address their concerns and needs.

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