

3.4 Relationship between Local Short-Term Uses of the Human Environment and the Maintenance and Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative would not have construction impacts or use local resources, nor would it enhance long-term productivity. This alternative would not provide long-term benefits to the community or the High Desert region. Route continuity would not be implemented and congestion relief would not be provided within the project vicinity, and operations on local roadways would worsen as the region's population grows.

Build Alternatives

Implementation of the HDC Project build alternatives would result in attainment of long-term transportation objectives as identified in federal, state, and local/regional planning documents dating back to the 1930s/40s as described in Section 1.1.2, Planning Background. The proposed project would provide a substantial long-term benefit to the High Desert region by improving east-west mobility and addressing present and future travel demand needs. Other long-term benefits of the proposed project are listed in Section 1.2.1, Purpose. As a new transportation facility, the HDC Project is an integral component of long-range planning for the High Desert region of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, as well as the southern California region.

The build alternatives would have similar impacts and are discussed separately only if an impact would not apply to all four build alternatives. These impacts would vary in degree and severity for each alternative, but they are generally similar.

The following local short-term impacts are expected from the project:

- **Displacement of Households and Businesses.** Relocation of these uses would be required, resulting in temporary disruption of residents, neighborhoods, and businesses. However, this would not result in substantial changes to community character and potential impacts to neighborhood cohesion over the long-term.
- **Construction Traffic Impacts.** Construction impacts related to travel lane closures and traffic detours would result in temporary inconveniences and lost productivity due to delays.
- **Construction Air Quality and Noise Impacts.** Properties in the vicinity of construction activities would be exposed to air and noise emissions and increased noise levels.
- **Temporary Natural Habitat Displacement.** Construction activities would displace natural habitat that is used by common and sensitive species; long-term adverse effects are not expected.
- **Increased Energy Usage during Construction.** A considerable amount of energy would be consumed during the operation of construction equipment and manufacture/fabrication of construction materials.

- **Environmental Justice Impacts.** Low-income populations identified within the project area may be affected and deterred from utilizing the new facility if one of the two tolling alternatives is selected.

Compliance with standard conditions and implementation of minimization and mitigation measures would help to reduce these impacts. These measures, which are identified in each section and summarized in Appendix F, include the phased acquisition of property, development of a Traffic Management Plan (TMP), and compliance with regulations designed to reduce construction-related impacts. Though the impacts would be considered short term when compared to the long-term productivity of the project, the duration of construction (approximately 30 months per 10-mile phase) may be viewed as a prolonged inconvenience to the residents and businesses in the immediate area of construction.

Short-term benefits would also result from the project. These benefits would include an increase in jobs and revenue in the local economy generated during construction activities.

The following long-term impacts are expected from the project:

- **Farmland Impacts.** The project would result in the permanent conversion of approximately 252 acres of designated Important Farmland and 2,965 acres of grazing lands to nonagricultural use. The alternative with HSR would involve the construction of station in the Palmdale area. This would affect about 650 acres of sheep grazing land in addition to the Important Farmland and grazing land under the alternatives without HSR.
- **Displacement of Households, Businesses, and Public Facilities.** Depending on the build alternative and variation, all of the build alternatives would result in the displacement of homes, businesses, and/or public facilities. Adequate replacement stock for residential and business units within the area has been identified.
- **Long-Term Loss of Habitat for Sensitive Species.** The project would remove about 5,700 acres of natural communities which could be used as habitat of various animal species.
- **Change in Visual Character.** The project would introduce a major transportation corridor in undeveloped areas of the High Desert region.
- **Potential Impacts to Archaeological and Paleontological Resources.** Previously unidentified cultural materials and/or paleontological resources could be unearthed and destroyed during construction activities.
- **Increased Noise.** Even with abatement, noise levels next to the roadway in some areas would be elevated with introduction of a new transportation facility.
- **Permanent Consumption of Construction Materials.** An irrevocable use of materials would be used during construction, including concrete, steel, and asphalt.

The project would provide long-term benefits both in and beyond the High Desert region. The following long-term benefits are expected from the project:

- **Improvement to Traffic Circulation.** The project would provide route continuity and relieve traffic congestion by providing a new 63-mile-long east-west continuous route from SR-18 in Apple Valley to SR-14 in Palmdale. These transportation improvements would better distribute traffic on the region's roadway network. As a result, this would benefit the community and support the circulation demands of future development in the project vicinity by increasing access to and from the region, while reducing congestion on local streets and alternate highways.
- **Reduction of Truck Trips on Local Roadways.** With a high-speed roadway, the HDC Project would attract truck traffic that currently uses substandard state highways and local roadways between Apple Valley and Palmdale. This would improve operations on state and local roadways throughout the project vicinity.
- **Improvement to Interregional Goods Movement.** Together, routes SR-14, SR-18, I-15, and US 395 provide a link to other state routes and interstate roadways that are used by trucks transporting goods beyond the local area; therefore, providing an improved route would allow more efficient goods movement in and beyond the HDC Project vicinity.

This page intentionally left blank.