

2.2 HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

2.2.1 Existing and Future Land Use

This section is based on the *Supplemental Community Impact Assessment* (Caltrans 2026a) prepared for the Project.

2.2.1.1 Affected Environment

The *Affected Environment* section addresses potential impacts on existing and future land uses within the community impact study area, which is defined as the area within 0.5 mile of the Limits of Disturbance.

Existing Land Use

Existing land uses within the Project area, as defined in Table 2.2.1-1, are based on 2019 land use data from the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Although SCAG's land use data may not directly correlate with individual cities' land use designations, as identified in their respective land use maps and general plans, the analysis in this section will defer to SCAG's land use designations. This is because only SCAG's comprehensive land use data are expansive enough to cover the entire community impact study area.

Table 2.2.1-1. Existing Land Use Definitions

Land Use	Definition
Commercial and Services	This designation includes areas used predominantly for business or the sale of products and their associated services as well as non-commercial uses such as government and public service offices. This class does not include industrial activities.
Education	This designation includes all levels of public and private schools, colleges, universities, seminaries, and training centers. It also includes buildings, open space, dormitories, and parking areas. Also included are all athletic facilities such as ball fields, stadiums, soccer fields, swimming pools, and tennis courts.
Facilities	This designation includes government offices and other public service facilities, major health care facilities, religious facilities, and public and private educational facilities. This category also includes associated facilities and parking areas.
General Office	This designation allows office buildings that are usually for financial, personnel, business, medical, and other professional services.
Industrial	This designation includes areas where manufacturing, assembly, processing, packaging, or the storage of products takes place.

Land Use	Definition
Mobile Homes and Trailer Parks	This designation includes residential units such as mobile homes, trailers, and prefabricated homes that are either stationary (i.e., with foundations) or on wheels and capable of being moved. Included are vacant and occupied spaces and associated storage facilities. Mobile homes and trailer parks are usually served by utilities, are on paved streets, and have access to urban facilities such as schools, parks, police, and fire stations.
Multi-Family Residential	This designation includes attached residences, apartments, condominiums, and townhouses. Multi-family residences are usually served by utilities, are on paved streets, and access to urban facilities such as schools, parks, police and fire stations. This designation also includes senior citizen apartment buildings and off-campus university housing.
Open Space and Recreation	This designation includes developed open areas within urban settings as well as urban and non-urban open areas developed for recreational activities.
Single-Family Residential	This designation is found in an urban or suburban setting and typically made up of detached dwellings, with each structure housing a single family. These residences are usually served by utilities, are on paved streets, and have access to urban facilities such as schools, parks, police, and fire stations.
Transportation, Communications, and Utilities	This designation includes major structures and facilities associated with of transportation, communications, and utilities.
Vacant	Vacant areas include lands that have not been built up with man-made structures; they contain no agricultural operations or water bodies. Such areas are open and contain natural or disturbed vegetation. Rangeland is included in this category. Areas containing abandoned structures are mapped according to their previous use.
Water	This designation includes open water bodies ^a larger than 2.5 acres in size.

Source: SCAG 2019

^a. As defined by SCAG, open water bodies include oceans, seas, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, rivers, estuaries, and channels devoid of nearby islands or other obstructions.

As described in Table 2.2.1-2 and shown on Figure 2.2.1-1, the existing land uses within the community impact study area consist primarily of commercial services, residential uses, open space and recreational uses, and industrial uses.

Table 2.2.1-2. Existing Land Use within Community Impact Study Area

Existing Land Use	Acres	Total Land Use (percent)^a
Commercial Services	510.1	23.8
Education	31.1	1.5
Facilities	37.6	1.8
General Office	9.5	0.4
Industrial	64.8	3.0
Mobile Homes and Trailer Parks	177.7	8.3
Multi-Family Residential	335.4	15.7
None ^b	0.6	0.0
Open Space and Recreation	91.1	4.3
Single-Family Residential	435.5	20.4
Transportation, Communications, and Utilities	4.9	0.2
Vacant	1.6	0.1
Water	2.5	0.1
Total	1,702.7	79.6^c

Source: SCAG 2019

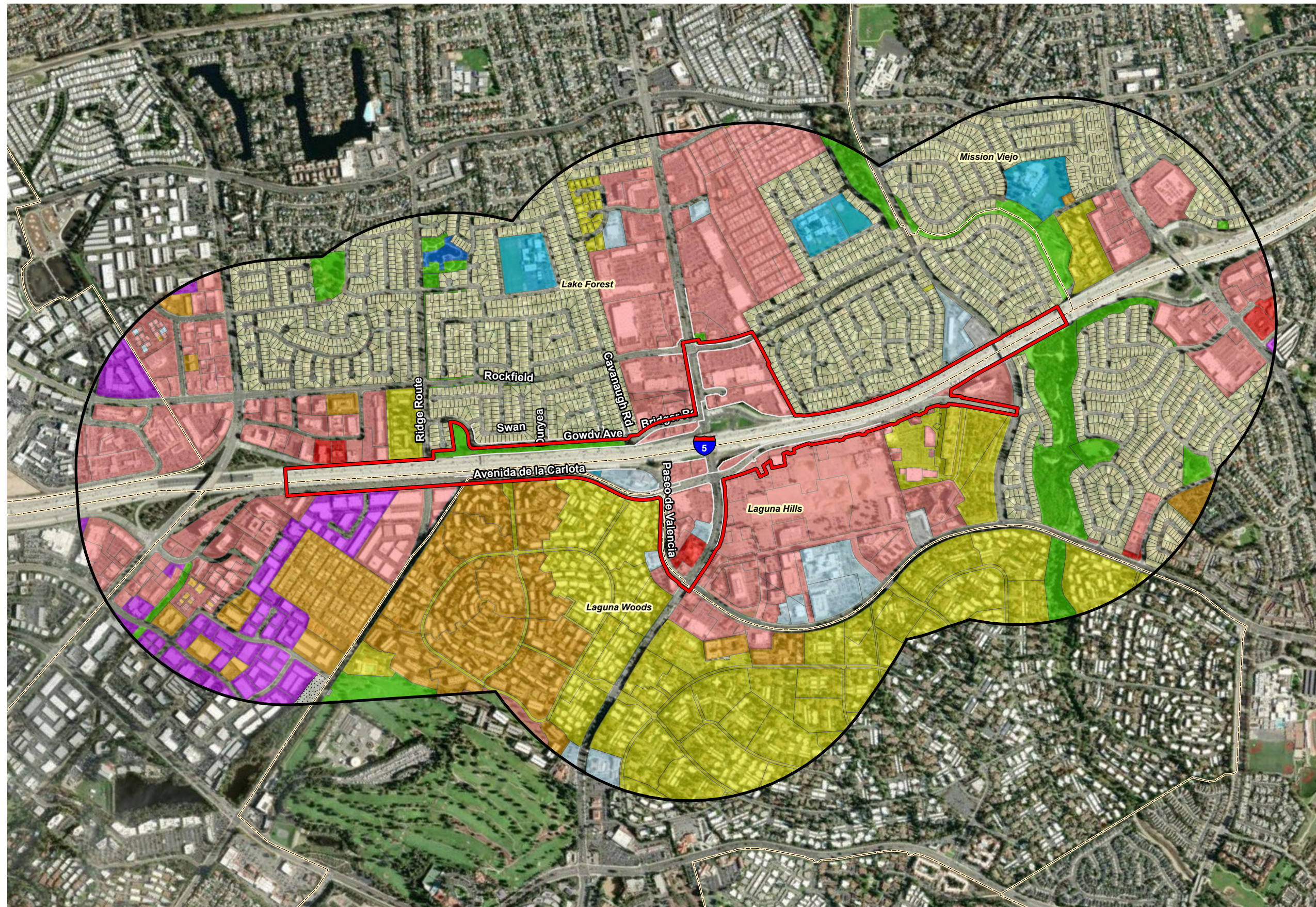
^a. The total area of the resource study area (RSA) is 2,138.9 acres. The percentage of each land use type within the RSA was based on the total area of the RSA.

^b. Areas designated in SCAG's 2019 land use data as having no land use information.

^c. The SCAG land use data are based on Assessor's Parcel Numbers; therefore, the total land use percentage does not add up to 100 percent because some areas within the RSA do not have parcel data.

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- Legend**
- Existing Right-of-Way
 - Community Impact Study Area
 - Limits of Disturbance
- Land Use**
- Commercial and Services
 - Education
 - Facilities
 - General Office
 - Industrial
 - Mobile Homes and Trailer Parks
 - Multi-Family Residential
 - Open Space and Recreation
 - Single Family Residential
 - Transportation, Communications, and Utilities
 - Vacant
 - Water

Source: SCAG (2019); ESRI Imagery (2025)

Figure 2.2.1-1

I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project
Existing Land Use

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General Plan Land Use Designations

The existing land uses within the Limits of Disturbance are consistent with the land use designations in the general plans of the Cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest.

City of Laguna Hills

General plan land use designations within Laguna Hills immediately southwest of Interstate (I-) 5 consist primarily of residential and mixed-use designations, followed by commercial and recreational/open space. The general plan land use designations are generally consistent with the existing land use patterns.

City of Laguna Woods

General plan land use designations within Laguna Woods immediately west of I-5 consist primarily of residential and commercial uses. The general plan land use designations are generally consistent with the existing land use patterns.

City of Lake Forest

General plan land use designations within Lake Forest immediately east of I-5 are primarily commercial and residential designations, followed by recreational/open space and facilities. The general plan land use designations are generally consistent with the existing land use patterns.

Future Land Use

Future land uses in the community impact study area consist primarily of commercial and residential land uses. Business parks; mixed-use developments; a high-density residential development, including an apartment complex; and commercial corridors are planned. Figure 2.2.1-2 and Table 2.2.1-33 provide the location and status of current and future development projects within the community impact study area. These projects are environmentally approved and considered proposed, pending approval, currently under construction, or have been recently constructed. The timeframe includes any project that may occur within 3 years of the opening year (2035) of the Project.

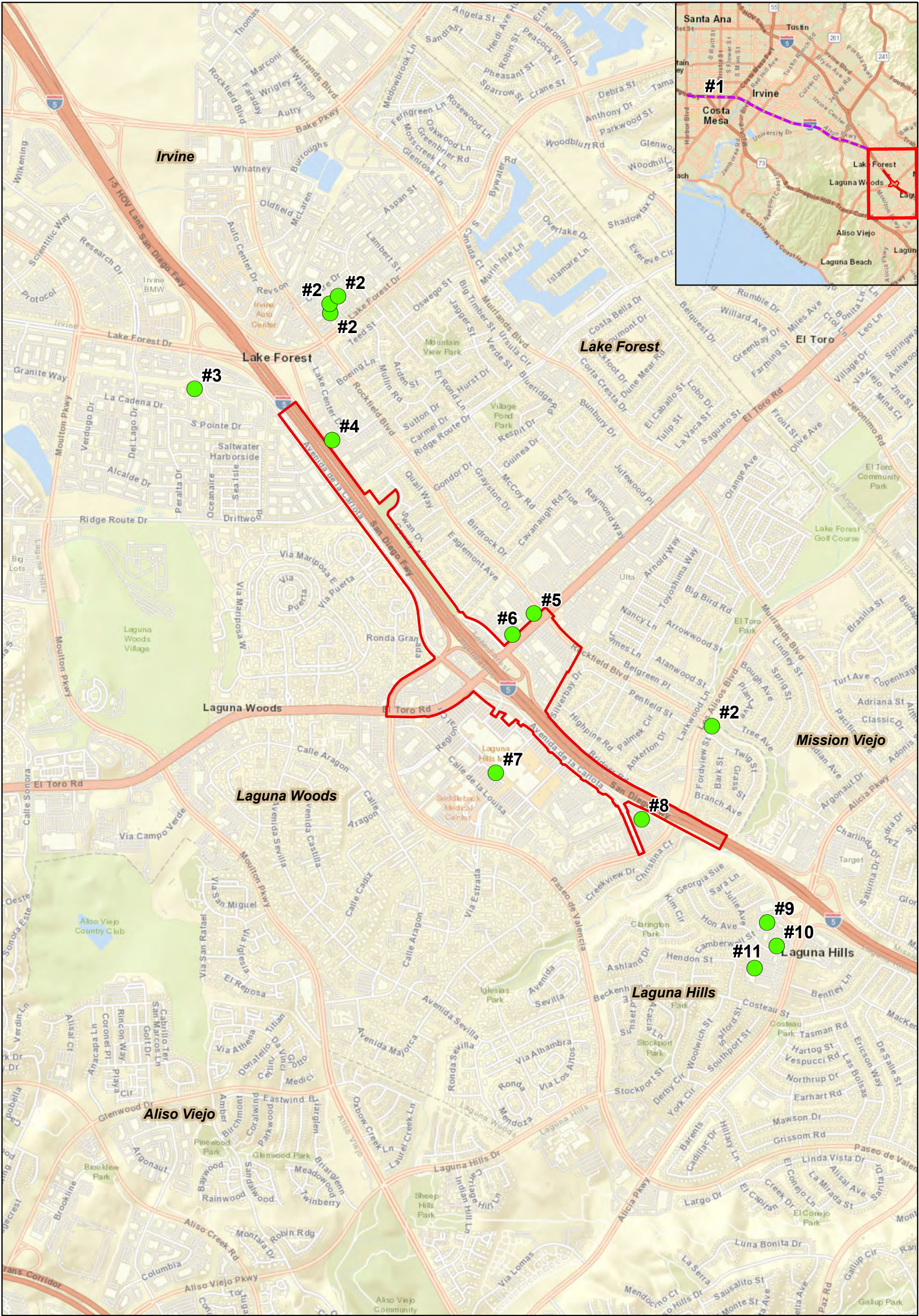
Table 2.2.1-3. Current and Future Development Projects

Project Name	Location/Jurisdiction	Project Description	Status	Approximate Distance from Limits of Disturbance
Lake Forest Redevelopment Project	Southwest corner of the El Toro Road and Rockfield Boulevard intersection in Lake Forest, CA	The project would modify the existing shopping center/strip mall on the southwest corner of El Toro Road and Rockfield Boulevard. The proposed land uses for the redeveloped property are residential and retail.	Proposed. The project is currently in the planning phase.	1,000 feet to the north
Site Development Permit 07-24-5724, Chase Mixed Use	23861 El Toro Road Lake Forest, CA	Demolition of the existing Arby's/The Pub Restaurant building to construct a new five-level residential building with 165 units, approximately 3,275 square feet of retail uses, and a five-level parking garage. Also included is the conversion of a Chase Bank building into a hotel with surface parking and construction of a four-story hotel, which will be connected to the Chase Bank building via a passageway/patio.	Proposed. A site development permit application has been submitted to the City of Lake Forest.	300 feet to the north
Site Development Permit 07-25-5817	23221 Lake Center Drive, Lake Forest, CA	Conversion of Sammy's Original into a medical office for Head and Neck Associates of Orange County. The project would involve the addition of approximately 1,150 square feet and exterior façade remodeling.	Proposed. A site development permit application has been submitted to the City of Lake Forest.	0.5 mile to the west
Use Permit UP 07-25-5819	26336 Rockfield Boulevard and 22865, 22861, 22859 Lake Forest Drive, Lake Forest, CA	Expansion of the existing Subaru vehicle dealership. The project includes, but is not limited to, a new six-level parking structure with a service center on the ground level, a new car wash, and an addition and façade remodeling for the main sales building.	Proposed. A use permit application has been submitted to the City of Lake Forest.	0.5 mile to the northeast

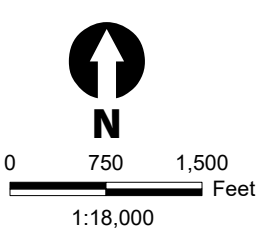
Project Name	Location/Jurisdiction	Project Description	Status	Approximate Distance from Limits of Disturbance
The Village at Laguna Hills	24155 Laguna Hills Mall, Laguna Hills, CA	The Village at Laguna Hills Project would redevelop the former Laguna Hills Mall property, a 68-acre site. The project would include restaurants, parks, entertainment, shopping, and living spaces.	Proposed. The redevelopment plan was originally approved in 2022 but was revised due to changing market conditions. The new redevelopment plans will need to be approved by the Laguna Hills City Council, followed by a 6- to 12-month process to obtain building permits to start construction.	Immediately adjacent to the southeast
Dutch Bros. Coffee	24791 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills, CA	The project constructed a 950-square-foot coffee shop with a drive-thru.	Constructed. The project was approved in 2024 and construction has been completed.	1 mile to the east
The Tiller House (Laguna Hills Inn)	23061 Avenida de la Carlota, Laguna Hills, CA	The project renovated an existing hotel. This included façade renovation and a ground-floor addition of 1,306 square feet to provide a lobby waiting area and seating for dining and business.	Constructed. The project was approved in 2022 and renovation was completed in 2024.	1 mile to the west
Laguna Hills Plaza remodel	24791–24881 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills, CA	The project is remodeling an existing shopping plaza. The proposed building area is 101,413 square feet.	Under construction. The project was approved in 2023 and is currently under construction.	1.2 miles to the southeast
Honali Plaza remodel	24721–24781 Alicia Parkway, Laguna Hills, CA	The project remodeled an 85,000-square-foot neighborhood shopping center.	Constructed. The project was approved in 2022 and construction has been completed.	1.2 miles to the southeast
Oakbrook Plaza	24422 Avenida de la Carlota, Laguna Hills, CA	This is a new 240-unit multi-residential development project that would be located on 4.16 gross acres. The total size of the development, including parking, would be 572,421 square feet.	Proposed. The project was approved by the City of Laguna Hills on January 27, 2026.	0.6 mile to the east

Project Name	Location/Jurisdiction	Project Description	Status	Approximate Distance from Limits of Disturbance
I-405 Multi-Asset Project	I-5 to Harbor Boulevard in the cities of Irvine and Costa Mesa, along with a portion of unincorporated Orange County	This project will extend the life expectancy of pavement, improve safety and efficiency for travelers and maintenance crews, enhance traffic operations, manage congestion, and provide the ability to collect, analyze, and use data for systems performance along the I-405 corridor.	Under construction. Estimated completion date for construction is March 2027.	2.5 miles to the northwest

Source: City of Lake Forest 2025; City of Laguna Hills 2025; Caltrans 2025, 2026b



Sources: Caltrans 2023, ICF 2024, ESRI Imagery



- Limits of Disturbance

#1 - I-405 Multi-Asset Project

#2 - Use Permit UP 07-25-5819

#3 - The Tiller House (Laguna Hills Inn)

#4 - Site Development Permit 07-25-5817

#5 - Lake Forest Redevelopment Project
- #6 - Site Development Permit 07-24-5724 Chase Mixed-Use
- #7 - The Village at Laguna Hills
- #8 - Oakbrook Plaza
- #9 - Honali Plaza Remodel
- #10 - Dutch Bros. Coffee
- #11 - Laguna Hills Plaza Remodel

Figure 2.2.1-2

I-5 El Toro Road Interchange Project
Current and Future Development Projects

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2.2.1.2 Environmental Consequences

Temporary Impacts

Build Alternatives

Build Alternative 1

Build Alternative 1 would result in direct temporary impacts on existing land uses. Such impacts would be related to the temporary construction easements (TCE) that would be required to construct the Project. Activities within TCE areas may require construction workers, work trucks, material stockpiles, disturbed soil, scaffolding, and landscaping work. As shown in Table 2.2.1-4, temporary impacts on existing land uses associated with the TCEs would affect 1.07 acres under Build Alternative 1. The SCAG land use data used to determine land use impacts do not contain parcel data for all of the TCEs; therefore, the temporary land use impact acreage is less than the total TCE acreage. The TCEs required for the Project would affect 1.66 acres, as described in Section 2.2.5, *Relocations and Real Property Acquisition*.

Table 2.2.1-4. Build Alternative 1 Temporary Land Use Impacts

Existing Land Use	Temporary Impacts (acres)
	Build Alternative 1
Commercial Services	0.52
Education	0.04
Facilities	0.12
Open Space and Recreation	0.39
Single-Family Residential	< 0.01
Total	1.07

Source: Caltrans 2026a

Construction activities are generally not anticipated to require temporary closures, alterations, or other uses for the existing and planned developments listed in Table 2.2.1-33. However, there may be temporary impacts from realignment of Avenida de la Carlota under Build Alternative 1 within The Village at Laguna Hills site. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **COM-1**, and as described in Chapter 4, *Comments and Coordination*, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), and the City of Laguna Hills would work together to ensure that conflicts between Build Alternative 1 and The Village at Laguna Hills Project do not occur.

The Project would also include implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **LU-1** and **LU-2** to avoid or minimize temporary land use impacts that may occur during the construction phase. Avoidance and Minimization Measure **LU-1** would minimize or avoid the loss of landscaping to the extent feasible. Following construction, parcels would no longer be occupied and would return to their current uses. With implementation of

Avoidance and Minimization Measure **LU-2**, temporarily disturbed areas would be returned to property owners in the same condition they were in prior to construction or better. Because parcels would continue to be used for their current uses, there would be no substantial temporary adverse impacts or changes to existing land uses in the community impact study area. Therefore, Build Alternative 1 would not result in temporary adverse effects on existing or planned land use patterns and development.

Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

Similar to Build Alternative 1, Build Alternative 1a would require TCEs, which would result in temporary impacts during construction of the Project. As shown in Table 2.2.1-5, temporary impacts on existing land uses associated with the TCEs would affect 1.59 acres under Build Alternative 1a. The SCAG land use data used to determine land use impacts do not contain parcel data for all of the TCEs; therefore, the temporary land use impact acreage is less than the total TCE acreage. The TCEs would affect 1.71 acres, as described in Section 2.2.5, *Relocations and Real Property Acquisition*.

Table 2.2.1-5. Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a Temporary Land Use Impacts

Existing Land Use	Temporary Impacts (acres)
	Build Alternative 1a
Commercial Services	1.03
Education	0.04
Facilities	0.12
Open Space and Recreation	0.39
Single-Family Residential	< 0.01
Total	1.59

Source: Caltrans 2026a

As with Build Alternative 1, Avoidance and Minimization Measures **LU-1**, **LU-2**, and **COM-1** would be implemented under Build Alternative 1a to avoid or minimize land use impacts during the construction phase. Therefore, Build Alternative 1a would not result in temporary adverse effects on existing or planned land use patterns and development.

Build Alternative 3

Build Alternative 3 would have no temporary impacts on existing land uses because ground disturbance would not be required. As a result, no acquisition or conversion of existing land uses would occur, and existing land use patterns would remain unchanged. Therefore, no temporary disruptions to land use would occur.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, I-5 would remain in its current condition and no improvements would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no Project-related temporary land use impacts.

Permanent Impacts

Build Alternatives

Build Alternative 1

Direct permanent impacts on land use would consist of the partial and full fee acquisitions along I-5, including the permanent conversion of portions of existing land uses to transportation facilities. As shown in Table 2.2.1-6, Build Alternative 1 would result in direct permanent impacts on existing land uses, consisting of 4.74 acres. As previously discussed, the SCAG land use data used to determine land use impacts do not contain parcel data for all of the TCEs; therefore, the permanent land use impact acreage is less than the total permanent impact acreage required for the Project. Full and partial acquisitions would affect 4.16 acres, as described in Section 2.2.5, *Relocations and Real Property Acquisition*.

Table 2.2.1-6. Build Alternative 1 Permanent Land Use Impacts

Existing Land Use	Permanent Impacts (acres)
	Alternative 1
Commercial Services	4.23
Education	0.01
Facilities	0.04
Open Space and Recreation	0.45
Total	4.74

Source: Caltrans 2026a

One acquisition would occur within the former Laguna Hills Mall property. A portion of the site planned for mixed-use redevelopment would be converted to transportation use to accommodate realignment of Avenida de la Carlota. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **COM-1**, Caltrans, OCTA, and the City of Laguna Hills would work together to ensure that conflicts from the Project's proposed realignment of Avenida de la Carlota and the development plans for the Village at Laguna Hills do not occur. In addition, as described in Chapter 4, *Comments and Coordination*, coordination between Caltrans, OCTA, and the City of Laguna Hills has occurred and will continue throughout design and construction of the Project.

With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **LU-1**, design modifications to minimize or avoid the loss of landscaping as well as noncompliance with general development standards would be selected, if feasible. If Build Alternative 1 results in the loss of landscaping or noncompliance with development standards, Caltrans would coordinate with the Cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest to obtain landscaping or setback variances for properties where the Project would reduce the required amount of landscaping to a level below the applicable municipal landscaping and setback requirements. With implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measure **LU-3**, Caltrans would continue to coordinate with the Cities of Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, and

Laguna Woods to ensure the modification of land use designations for properties that would be acquired for the Project that are not currently designated for transportation uses within the land use elements of the cities' general plans. Therefore, with implementation of Avoidance and Minimization Measures **LU-1**, **LU-3**, and **COM-1**, the Project would not result in a substantial change to the existing land uses in the community impact study area. In addition, the Project is anticipated to improve the transportation network that serves land uses within the community impact study area. Therefore, Build Alternative 1 would not result in permanent adverse impacts on land use.

Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a

Build Alternative 1a would result in the same types of direct temporary impacts on existing land uses as Build Alternative 1. However, as shown in Table 2.2.1-7, temporary impacts on existing land uses would affect 4.18 acres under Build Alternative 1a, but full and partial acquisitions would total 4.38 acres, as described in Section 2.2.5, *Relocations and Real Property Acquisition*. As previously discussed, the difference in impact acreages is attributed to the use of different datasets for each analysis.

Table 2.2.1-7. Design Variation: Build Alternative 1a Permanent Land Use Impacts

Existing Land Use	Permanent Impacts (acres)
	Alternative 1A
Commercial Services	3.68
Education	0.01
Facilities	0.04
Open Space and Recreation	0.45
Total	4.18

Source: Caltrans 2026a

Under Build Alternative 1a, a new public street is proposed that would provide access to the Village at Laguna Hills from the new southbound I-5/Avenida de la Carlota ramp south of El Toro Road. As with Build Alternative 1, Avoidance and Minimization Measures **LU-1**, **LU-3** and **COM-1** would be implemented under Build Alternative 1a to avoid or minimize permanent land use impacts. In addition, as described in Chapter 4, *Comments and Coordination*, coordination between Caltrans, OCTA, and the City of Laguna Hills has occurred and will continue throughout design and construction of the Project. Therefore, Build Alternative 1a would not result in permanent adverse effects on existing or planned land use patterns and development.

Build Alternative 3

Build Alternative 3 would not result in permanent impacts on existing land uses because ground disturbance would not be required. As a result, no acquisition or conversion of existing land uses would occur, and existing land use patterns would remain unchanged. However, Build Alternative 3 is anticipated to improve the transportation network that

serves land uses within the community impact area. Therefore, there would be no Project-related permanent land use impacts under Build Alternative 3.

No-Build Alternative

Under the No-Build Alternative, I-5 would remain in its current condition, and no improvements would be implemented. Therefore, there would be no Project-related permanent land use impacts under the No-Build Alternative.

2.2.1.3 Avoidance, Minimization, and/or Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following minimization measures, as provided below, and **REL-1** (see Section 2.2.5, *Relocations and Real Property Acquisition*) would avoid or minimize adverse land use impacts:

- LU-1** During final design, in accordance with the Highway Design Manual, design modifications that will minimize or avoid the loss of landscaping and noncompliance with general development standards will be selected, if feasible. If such losses cannot be minimized or avoided and the Project still results in the loss of landscaping or other noncompliance with development standards, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) will coordinate with the Cities of Laguna Hills, Laguna Woods, and Lake Forest to obtain landscaping or setback variances for properties where the Project would reduce the required amount of landscaping below the applicable municipal landscaping and setback requirements.
- LU-2** Prior to construction, the construction contractor will generate time-stamped photo documentation of the pre-construction conditions of all temporary staging areas. Following completion of the Project, areas that are temporarily disturbed by construction activities would be returned to their property owners in the same or better condition than prior to construction. Owners of parcels where TCEs are required will receive compensation for the temporary use of a portion of their property.
- LU-3** Caltrans will continue to coordinate with the Cities of Lake Forest, Laguna Hills, and Laguna Woods to reflect the modification of land use designations for properties that will be acquired for the Project that are not currently designated for transportation uses within the Land Use Element of their general plan.
- COM-1** The former Laguna Hills Mall property is currently in the redevelopment design phase to convert the 68-acre site into a mixed-use property that would include restaurants, parks, entertainment, shopping, and living spaces. The redevelopment project is known as the Village at Laguna Hills. Caltrans, OCTA, and the City of Laguna Hills will work together to ensure

there are no conflicts with the proposed Project's realignment of Avenida de la Carlota and the development plans for the Village at Laguna Hills.