

3.10 Land Use and Planning/Agriculture and Forestry Resources

This section evaluates land use issues related to construction and operation of the proposed project, including project consistency with local and regional plans and policies. This evaluation is based on review of adopted local land use plans and policies, reconnaissance visits, and aerial photographs.

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

Regional Setting

Riverside County encompasses approximately 7,200 square miles of land from the Colorado River to the east to the Santa Ana Mountains to the west. At its westernmost point, Riverside County is less than 10 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The western half of the County is separated from the eastern half by the San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mountains. Several man-made lakes are located in the western portion of the County, including Lake Matthews, Lake Perris, Lake Skinner, Vail Lake, and Diamond Valley Lake. The lakes provide water storage and recreational opportunities. In recent years the county has experienced substantial urbanization that has altered the regional character from a rural, inland desert area to one of the major population centers of Southern California. Key areas of development include the cities of Riverside, Moreno Valley, Perris, Lake Elsinore, Hemet, and Temecula, as well as the March Air Reserve Base.

Local Setting

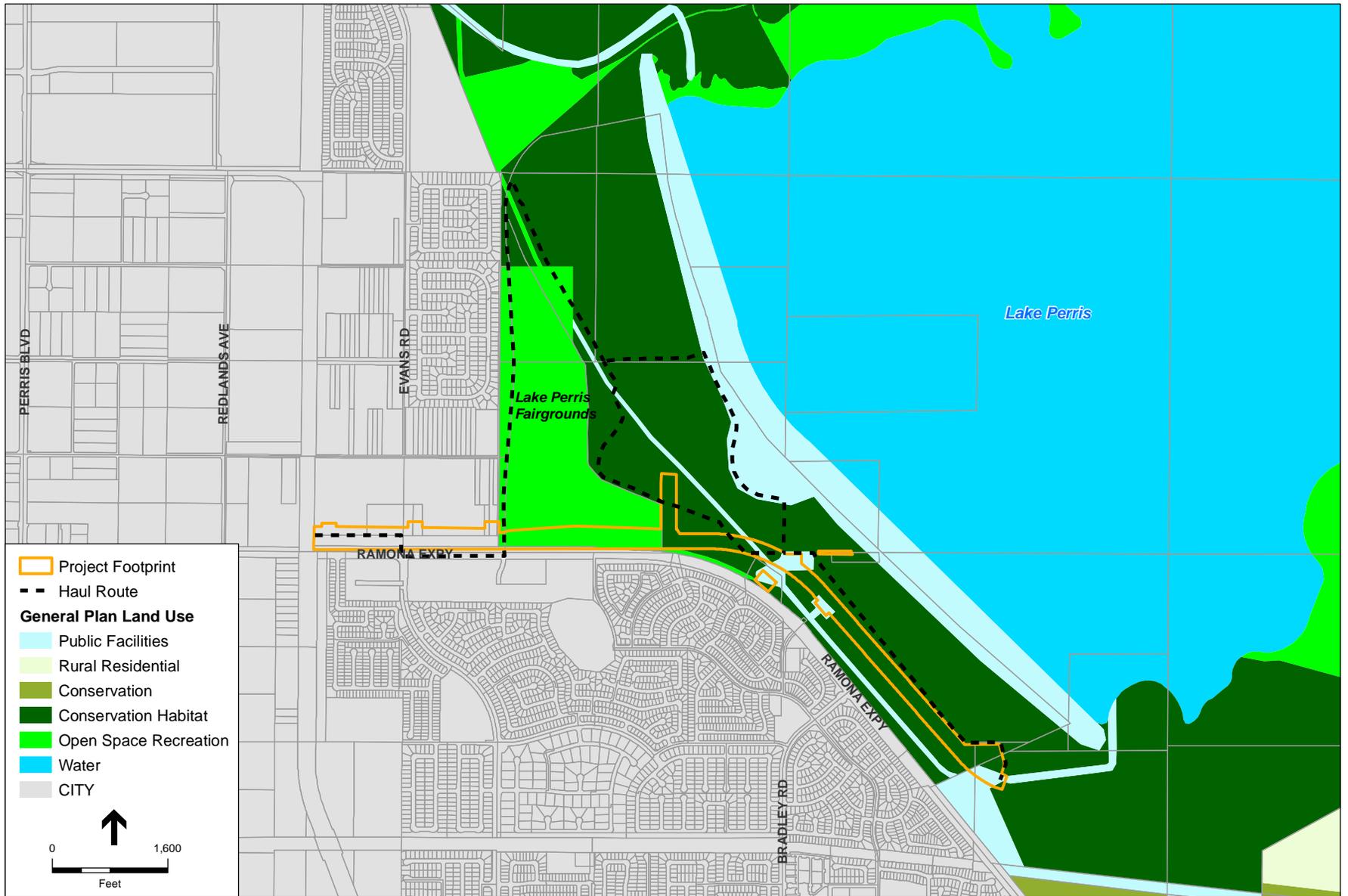
Existing Land Use Environment

The proposed project is located near Lake Perris, in an unincorporated area of Riverside County, and a small portion is in the city of Perris boundaries. Lake Perris and the area immediately around the lake are owned by the Department of Water Resources (DWR) and comprise the Lake Perris SRA. The Lake Perris State Recreation Area (SRA) is managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. DWR owns and operates the State Water Project facilities on-site, including the dam and outlet facilities. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) owns and manages the areas below the dam for habitat conservation value. The Lake Perris Fairgrounds operate on a 108-acre area at the southwest corner of the Lake Perris SRA on land owned by the State of California.

Riverside County

General Plan Land Use Designations

Riverside County General Plan and the City of Perris General Plan land use designations in the project vicinity are illustrated in **Figure 3.10-1**. Land use in and around Lake Perris is largely governed by the Riverside County General Plan and is part of the County of Riverside Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan (County of Riverside, 2003). Lake Perris is surrounded by lands designated as Public Facilities (P), Open Space (OS), and Conservation (C).



SOURCE: Riverside County GIS, 2014.

Perris Dam Emergency Release Facility . 120083.02

Figure 3.10-1
Riverside County General Plan Land Use Designations

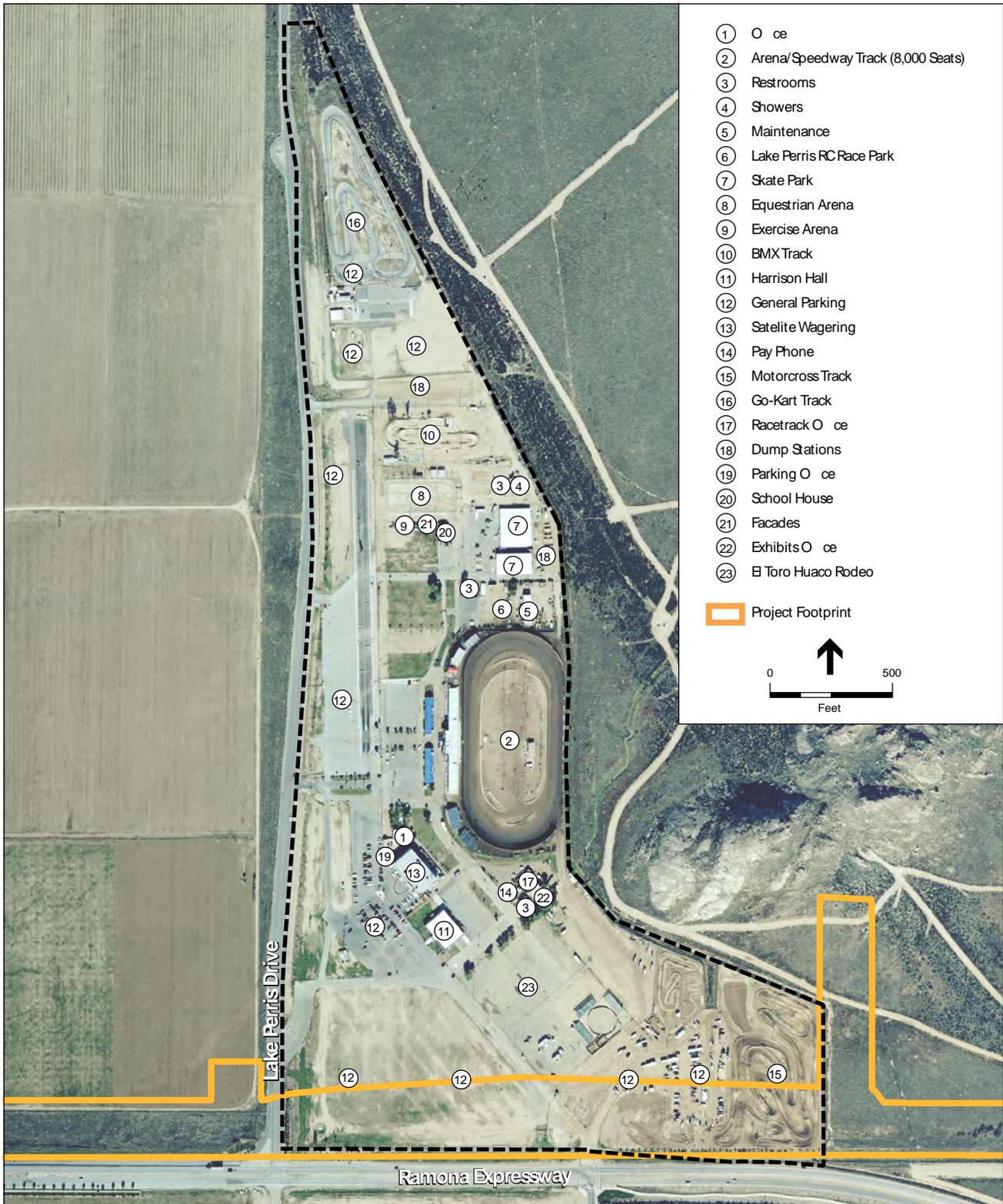
The Land Use Element of the General Plan for the County of Riverside defines these land use categories as follows:

Conservation (C) – The Conservation land use designation applies to public and private lands conserved and managed in accordance with adopted Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plans (MSHCPs). Ancillary structures or uses may be permitted for the purpose of preserving or enjoying open space. Actual building or structure size, siting, and design would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Open Space (OS) – The Open Space – Parks/Recreation/Natural Open Space land use designation allows for active and passive recreational uses such as parks, trails, camp grounds, athletic fields, golf courses, and off-road vehicle parks. Ancillary structures may be permitted for recreational opportunities. Actual building or structure size, siting, and design would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Public Facilities (P) – The Public/Semi-Public Facilities/Utilities area plan land use designation provides for the development of various public, quasi-public, and private uses with similar characteristics, such as governmental facilities, utility facilities, including public and private electric generating stations and corridors, landfills, airports, educational facilities, and maintenance yards. Privately held uses with public facility characteristics are not required to be designated as Public Facilities, but are eligible to be so designated based on site-specific reviews of the characteristics of the use in question. Because of the varied nature of this category, building intensity and design criteria for uses shall generally comply with those standards and policies most similar to the intended use. Airports, utility facilities, other than electric generating stations, and landfills generally have low Floor Area Ratios (FAR) (the ratio of a building's total floor area). Building intensities for civic uses such as County administrative buildings and schools, however, are comparable to other employment generating land use designations. The maximum intensity allowed for civic uses within the Public Facilities designation is 0.60 FAR. Actual FAR would vary for other uses and the appropriate FAR would, therefore, be determined in the zoning ordinance.

The Lake Perris Fairgrounds are located west of the Lake Perris SRA and north of the Ramona Expressway in unincorporated Riverside County and encompass 108 acres of land designated as Open Space. According to the 46th District Agricultural Association (DAA), approximately 600,000 people visit the Fairgrounds annually (DAA, 2013). The site is home to the Southern California Fair. The Lake Perris Fairgrounds are operated and managed by the DAA, a state agency that receives fiscal and policy oversight from both the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Division of Fairs and Expositions. Lake Perris Fairgrounds facilities near the proposed project site include the Lucas Oil/Starwest Motocross Park, the El Toro Huaco Rodeo, and a parking lot. Additionally, the Perris Fairgrounds house an 8,000-seat speedway track; a hall that can be reserved for meetings, conferences, and weddings; the Apex Go-Kart track; the Lake Perris BMX track; a skate park; an equestrian arena; satellite wagering facilities; and office facilities. **Figure 3.10-2** provides a map of the Lake Perris Fairgrounds. Facilities are regularly rented for a variety of events, including both long-term contracts and interim contracts for circuses, tent sales, consumer shows, concerts, rodeos, recreational vehicle (RV) rallies, receptions, and car shows.



SOURCE: ESA, 2014.

Perris Dam Emergency Release Facility . 120083.02

Figure 3.10-2
Existing Lake Perris
Fairgrounds Facilities

Existing Agricultural Environment

Agricultural resources in the project area and adjacent lands, as determined by the California Department of Conservation, are shown in **Figure 3.10-3**. Specifically, there is one site within the vicinity of the project area that has been designated as agricultural land by the State, though not by the Riverside County General Plan. It is located east of the dam in the city of Perris and the southeastern portion of the Perris Fairgrounds. The southeastern portion of the Perris Fairgrounds, which is currently a parking lot, has been designated as Farmland of Local Importance (Department of Conservation, 2004). The adjacent land in the city of Perris, situated between the Fairgrounds and the Perris Valley Channel, is designated as Prime Farmland and Farmland of Statewide Importance. These lands are mostly undeveloped at present, except in the northeast corner where residential development has begun. The proposed emergency release facility would run through the undeveloped land adjacent to the northern side of the Ramona Expressway. There are no Williamson Act contracts in the project area or in adjacent lands (see Section 3.10.2 *Regulatory Framework* below for a description of the Williamson Act).

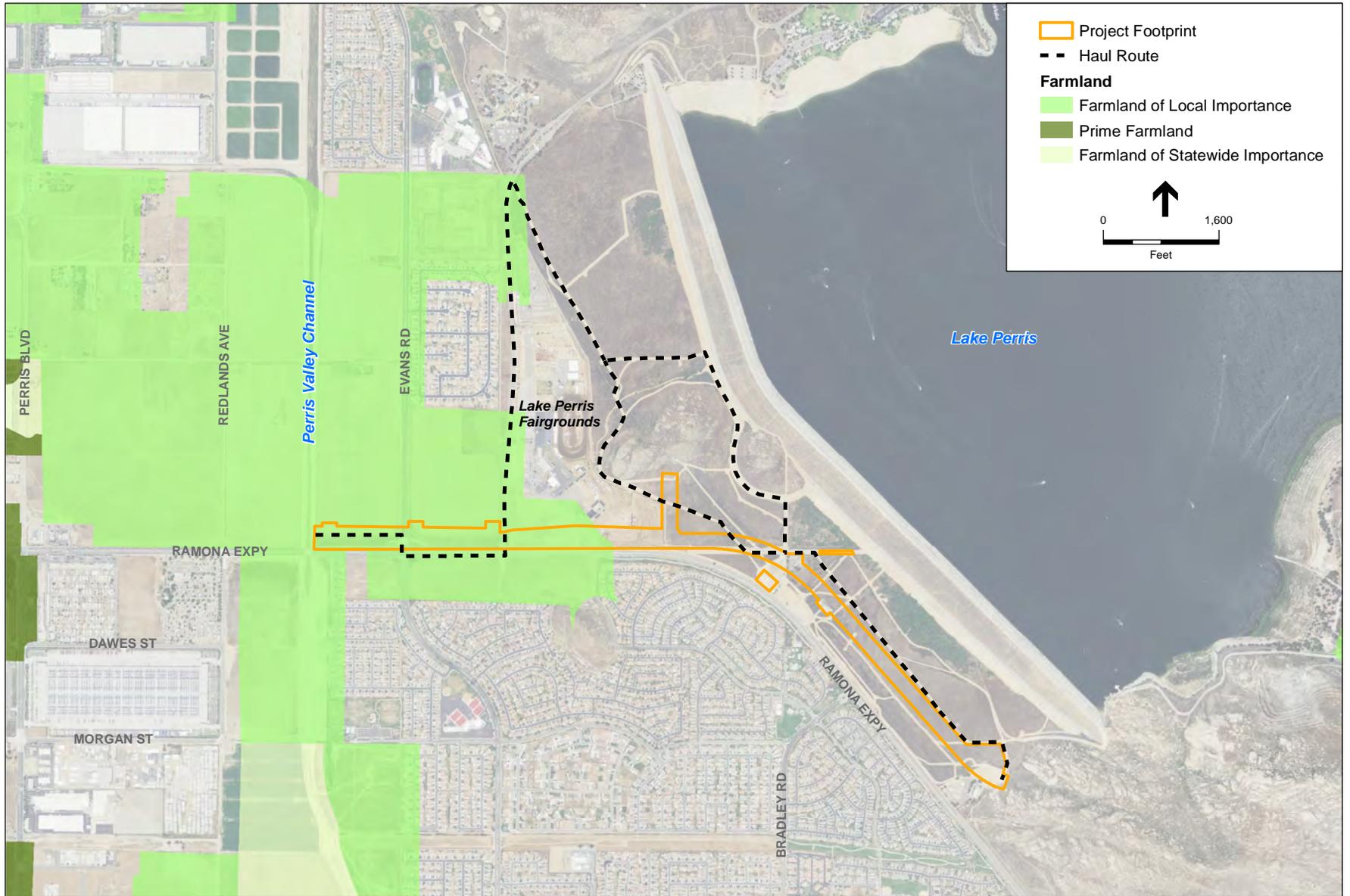
3.10.2 Regulatory Framework

State

California Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program

The California Department of Conservation, under the Division of Land Resource Protection, has established the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The FMMP monitors the conversion of the state's farmland to and from agricultural use. The map series identifies eight classifications and uses a minimum mapping unit size of 10 acres. The FMMP also produces a biannual report on the amount of land converted from agricultural to non-agricultural use. The FMMP maintains an inventory of state agricultural land and updates its "Important Farmland Series Maps" every 2 years (Department of Conservation, 2007). Important farmlands are divided into the following five categories based on their suitability for agriculture.

- 1. Prime Farmland.** Prime Farmland is land with the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics able to sustain long-term production of agricultural crops. This land has produced irrigated crops at some time within the 4 years prior to the mapping date.
- 2. Farmland of Statewide Importance.** Farmland of Statewide Importance is land that meets the criteria for Prime Farmland but with minor shortcomings, such as greater slopes or lesser soil moisture capacity.
- 3. Unique Farmland.** Unique Farmland has even lesser quality soils and produces the state's leading agricultural crops. This land is usually irrigated but also includes non-irrigated orchards and vineyards.
- 4. Farmland of Local Importance.** Farmland of Local Importance is land that is important to the local agricultural economy as determined by each county's board of supervisors and a local advisory committee.
- 5. Grazing Land.** Grazing Land is land on which the existing vegetation is suited to the grazing of livestock.



SOURCE: NAIP Imagery.

Perris Dam Emergency Release Facility . 120083.02

Figure 3.10-3
Farmland

Williamson Act

The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, also known as the Williamson Act, is designed to preserve agricultural and open-space lands by discouraging their premature and unnecessary conversion to urban uses (Department of Conservation, 2007b). The Act creates an arrangement whereby private landowners contract with Counties and Cities to voluntarily restrict their land to agricultural and compatible open-space uses. In return, Williamson Act contracts offer tax incentives by ensuring that land would be assessed for its agricultural productivity rather than its highest and best use. Contracts run for a period of 10 years; however, some jurisdictions exercise the option of making them long-term, up to 20 years. Contracts are automatically renewed unless the landowner files for nonrenewal or petitions for cancellation. Williamson Act contracts can be divided into the following categories: Prime Agricultural Land, Non-Prime Agricultural Land, Open Space Easement, Built Up Land, and Agricultural Land in Non-Renewal.

Local

Riverside County

Riverside County General Plan

The County of Riverside General Plan recognizes 19 geographic planning areas within the county. The proposed project is located within the Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan as well as the city of Perris.

The Land Use Element, the Multipurpose Open Space Element, and the Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan govern the land use and agricultural resources of the county and the proposed project area. The Land Use Element presents goals and policies that guide future development patterns in the county. The Multipurpose Open Space Element outlines the County's intentions for protecting and preserving natural resources, agriculture, open space, and recreational opportunities (Riverside Multipurpose Open Space Element, 2008). The Reche Canyon/Badlands Area Plan contains specific policies that guide the physical development of this particular part of Riverside County to be used in conjunction with the County of Riverside General Plan and Vision Statement. Some goals and policies for land use and open space in the County of Riverside General Plan that are relevant to the proposed project are as follows:

General Plan Land Use Element

Infrastructure, Public Facilities & Service Provisions

Policy LU 5.4. Ensure that development and conservation land uses do not infringe upon existing public utility corridors, including fee owned rights-of-way and permanent easements, whose true land use is that of "public facilities." This policy will ensure that the "public facilities" designation governs over what otherwise may be inferred by the large scale general plan maps.

Open Space, Habitat & Natural Resource Preservation

Policy LU 8.1. Provide for permanent preservation of open space lands that contain important natural resources, hazards, water features, watercourses, and scenic and recreational values.

Airports

Policy LU 14.9. All development proposals within an Airport Influence Area will be submitted to the affected airport.

Open Space Area Plan Land Use Designations

Policy LU 18.2. Cooperate with the CDFW, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and any other appropriate agencies in establishing programs for the voluntary protection, and where feasible, voluntary restoration of significant environmental habitats.

Public Facilities

Policy LU 25.1. Accommodate the development of public facilities in areas appropriately designated by the General Plan and area plan land use maps.

General Plan Open Space Element

Open Space, Parks and Recreation

Policy OS 20.1. Preserve and maintain open space that protects County environmental resources and maximizes public health and safety in areas where significant environmental hazards and resources exist.

Policy OS 20.2. Prevent unnecessary extension of public facilities, services, and utilities, for urban uses, into Open Space-Conservation designated areas.

Reche Canyon Badlands Area Plan

Policy RCBAP 13.1. Protect visual and biological resources in the Reche Canyon/ Badlands area through adherence to General Plan policies found in the Multipurpose Open Space Element.

Zoning

The zoning classification for the portion of the proposed project within the boundaries of the county of Riverside is W-2: Controlled Development Areas. According to Riverside County's Zoning Ordinance, Article XV, Section (d), commercial fairgrounds and exhibitions are permitted, provided a conditional permit has been granted. Article IV, Section (e) allows for "structures and installations necessary to the conservation and development of water such as dams, pipelines, water conduits, tanks, reservoirs, wells and the necessary pumping and water production facilities."

The Riverside County General Plan was adopted on October 7, 2003, and an updated version was adopted in 2008. In 2003, a Consistency Zoning Program was outlined, the goal of which is to bring zoning designations into consistency with the General Plan within a reasonable period of time as required by California law. Consistency is determined on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 is consistent, 2 is generally consistent, 3 is generally inconsistent, and 4 is inconsistent. Within the project area, the OS-W land use designation and the W-2 zoning designation are rated 4, or inconsistent; the OS-CH land use designation and the W-2 zoning designation are rated 3, or

generally inconsistent; and the OS-R land use designation and the W-2 zoning designation are rated 2, or generally consistent.

City of Perris

General Plan Land Use Designations

The area west of Lake Perris Drive and north of the Ramona Expressway is within the city of Perris and is characterized by vacant land and some residential development. The Land Use Element of the City of Perris General Plan outlines 10 area plans within the city. A portion of the proposed project is located in city of Perris “Planning Area 1: North Industrial.” According to the most recently available General Plan Land Use map, the land use designation in this area is primarily Specific Plan with the exception of the northeast area that is designated as R-6,000 and the Perris Valley Channel, designated as Public (Perris General Plan Map, 2013). The Land Use Element for the City of Perris defines these land uses as follows:

Planning Area 1: North Industrial: This area is generally made up of “industrial” land use designations and uses. While there are some residential uses in this area, the majority of land uses are non-residential. There are no schools or parks. This area is near March Global Port, and future land uses could include air-cargo support and air-cargo dependent businesses. Noise-sensitive uses that would be disturbed by air cargo or military plane over-flights, such as residential development, should be discouraged. Heavy truck traffic can be expected in this area, affecting future roadway design and maintenance.

R-6,000 Single Family Residential: 6,000-square-foot lot allows for low-density, single-family dwellings at densities up to 7 units per acre. Note: Mobile home subdivisions (zoning classification R5) will also be allowed within this land use category. Minimum lot size is consistent with those for (single family residential 6 (SFR 6), which will not increase intensity or density in these areas. By allowing mobile home subdivisions within this land use category, this City can provide opportunities for affordable housing.

Public/Semi-Public: These land use categories are locations for government facilities, public schools, and public services and utilities such as water and sewer district operations.

Zoning

According to the City of Perris Zoning Map, the parcels designated as R-6,000 are also zoned R-6,000, which is consistent with the land use designation. South of this area, the remaining city parcels are zoned R-10,000, with a single CN – Neighborhood Commercial parcel. South of the neighborhood zoning are two narrow parcels of land OS – Open Space, immediately adjacent to the Ramona Expressway. These open-space parcels are DWR easements used for public utilities lines (Perris Zoning Map, 2013).

3.10.3 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Significance Criteria

This section addresses potential impacts of the proposed project to land use and agricultural uses in the project area. The impact significance criteria are based on guidance provided by Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines regarding significant environmental

effects. For this Draft Environmental Impact Report, the proposed project would have a significant impact if it would:

- Physically divide an established community
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the General Plan, Specific Plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect
- Conflict with any habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan
- Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the FMMP of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use
- Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract
- Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104 [g])
- Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use
- Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use

Impact Analysis

Impact 3.10-1: The project could have a significant impact if it would physically divide an established community

The proposed project is located in the Lake Perris SRA, Perris Fairgrounds, and undeveloped land in the city of Perris. These areas are not developed with residential land uses. The nearest residential community is across the Ramona Expressway, south of the project site. Construction of the emergency conveyance facility would not divide a community. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Significance Determination: No Impact.

Impact 3.10-2: The project could have a significant impact if it would conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

SRA Segment

Two levees, the North Levee and the Main Levee, would be constructed as part of the emergency release conveyance facility along the SRA Segment. These levees would direct flows from the emergency release structure down-gradient toward a new drainage basin and weir structure located at the edge of the SRA where it meets the Lake Perris Fairgrounds. The existing land use designations in this segment are Conservation (C) and Public Facilities (P). Construction of the proposed project would temporarily impact areas of Conservation land use, but once the emergency release structure, levees, basin, and weir structure are complete, the proposed project would not conflict with existing land uses and the land would retain its habitat value.

Fairgrounds Segment

The proposed project would impact recreational uses and facilities at the Lake Perris Fairgrounds. The unlined channel would be 320 feet at its widest points and would impact approximately 13 acres of the Fairgrounds. However, 10 of those acres would be usable post-construction (see Figure 2-7) as the channel along this segment would accommodate dual uses and preserve the majority of the parking area at the southern portion of the Fairgrounds.

The channel would be designed to accommodate much of the existing uses at the Lake Perris Fairgrounds (parking and motocross uses), and although the property would be affected and the layout altered from existing conditions, the ability to accommodate these uses on the property as a dual use would be maintained. Impacts would be considered less than significant.

Access to the Lake Perris SRA and Lake Perris Fairgrounds would be maintained throughout construction, and events at the Fairgrounds would continue in the areas not closed by construction. DWR will coordinate with the Fairgrounds to ensure that construction activities are minimized during events and access and parking capacity are acceptable for events, to the extent feasible. Similarly, signs marking the Fairgrounds entrance would be maintained by DWR to minimize impacts to attendance at Fairgrounds events. Once construction is complete, use of the modified Fairgrounds for public events would be unimpeded.

Western Segment

The Western Segment would be developed as an unlined, earthen, trapezoidal channel approximately 2,500 feet long, with 160-foot top width, 100-foot bottom, and nine feet deep with 2:1 side slopes. The earthen channel would occupy approximately 13.6 acres. There will be a permanent 20-foot access road on both sides of the channel. The majority of the Western Segment is located in an easement owned by DWR, and the unlined channel is compatible with the county's Master Drainage Plan – Line U—this area is designated by the City of Perris as Specific Plan (SP) and is zoned Open Space. The Specific Plan notes the corridor north of Ramona Expressway, equivalent to the DWR-owned right-of-way, is reserved as a water conveyance channel. Therefore, the proposed project is compatible with the Specific Plan and would not conflict with existing land uses in the Western Segment.

Significance Determination: Less than Significant.

Impact 3.10-3: The project could have a significant impact if it would conflict with a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan.

The open space areas within the Lake Perris SRA are managed for their recreational and habitat values. The property is within the Western Riverside County MSHCP and the Stephens' Kangaroo Rat Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). As discussed in Section 3.3 Biological Resources, no listed species would be impacted by the project and no conserved lands would be removed from conservation. Therefore, the project would be compatible with the habitat management plans in the area and would not require participation in either HCP. However, to confirm the absence of Stephens' kangaroo rat within the proposed impact areas implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2 would be required. With implementation of mitigation measure BIO-2, impacts would be considered less than significant.

Significance Determination: Less than Significant with Mitigation.

Impact 3.10-4: The project could have a significant impact if it would convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use.

The Western Segment and Fairgrounds Segment of the emergency release facility would cross land within the city of Perris that is designated as Farmland of Local Importance by the California Department of Conservation (see Figure 3.10-3). This land is also designated as OS-R in the Riverside County General Plan. The Lake Perris Fairgrounds Segment designated as agricultural land on FMMP maps is currently a parking lot and a motocross facility (not agriculture). Land identified as Farmland of Local Importance along the Western Segment is designated as "city" in the Riverside County General Plan, the majority of which is composed of an existing right-of-way (ROW) owned by DWR that contains disturbed non-native grassland habitat. Staging areas would be placed within the adjacent agricultural fields to the north of the DWR ROW. Staging area impacts would be temporary, during construction only, and impacted areas would be returned to pre-project condition, as needed. Implementation of the proposed project would not convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural uses. Therefore, no impact would occur.

Significance Determination: No Impact.

Impact 3.10-5: The project could have a significant impact if it would conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract.

No Williamson Act contracts exist in the project area or in adjacent lands. See Impact 3.10-4 for a discussion regarding agricultural zoning within the proposed project area. No impact would occur.

Significance Determination: No Impact.

Impact 3.10-6: The project could have significant impact if it would conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220[g]), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code Section 51104 [g]).

The proposed project areas are not zoned as forest land, timberland, or timberland production. No impact would occur.

Significance Determination: No Impact.

Impact 3.10-7: The project could result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

The proposed project areas do not contain forest land (see Figure 3.3-1). Therefore, no impact due to the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use would occur.

Significance Determination: No Impact.

Impact 3.10-8: The project could have a significant impact if it would involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

No forest land exists within the proposed project areas. As discussed under Impact 3.10-4, the proposed project would not convert Farmland to non-agricultural use. Current fallow agricultural land exists north of the DWR-owned ROW along the Western Segment. The proposed project would include temporary staging areas within existing agricultural land, which would be returned to pre-project conditions after construction. In addition, the project would permanently remove 1.5 acres of the southern portion of the agricultural land to accommodate an access road on the north site of the channel. This area has been designated for uses other than agriculture in the City of Perris General Plan. The land change would be minimal in size and would be consistent with the General Plan. Impacts to farmland would be considered less than significant.

Significance Determination: Less than Significant.

References

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