Environmental and Land Use Impacts

RIVERSIDE AND SAN BERNARDINO COUNTIES

THRIVE Inland SoCal

Thrive Inland SoCal is a comprehensive, collaborative, and inclusive regional economic development effort working to boost quality job creation and expand access to quality jobs and wealth-building for all Inland Empire residents, especially those that have been historically disinvested and underrepresented.

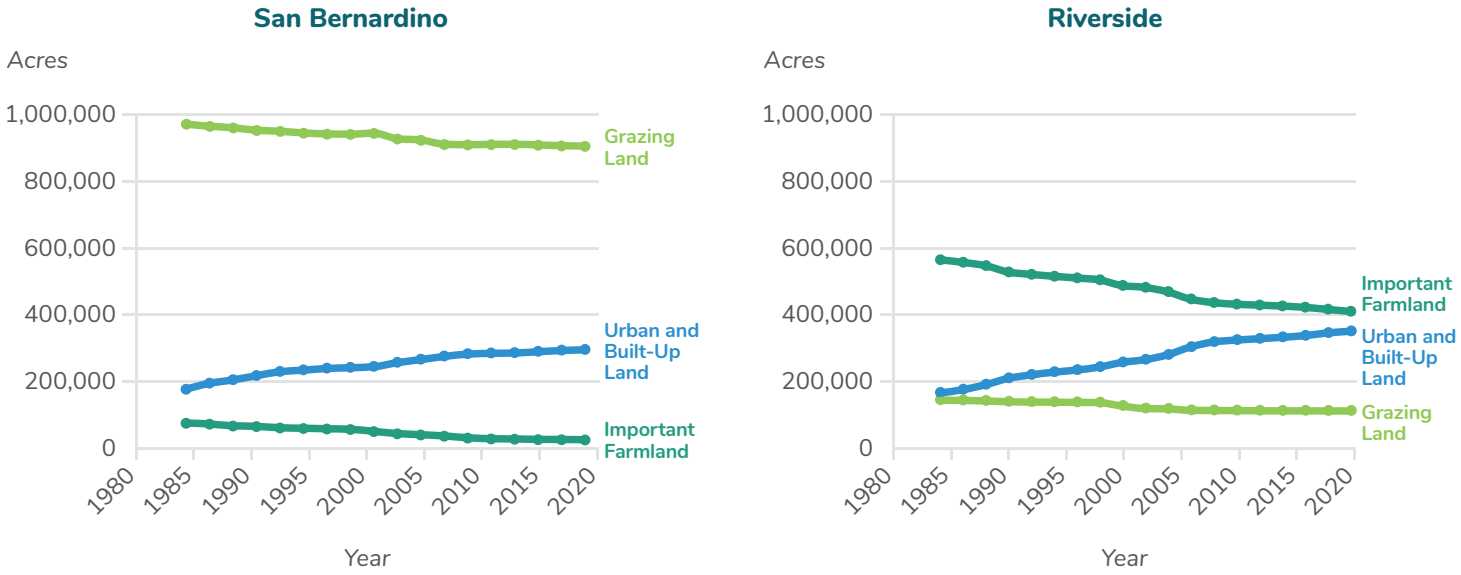
So that all stakeholders have the same baseline information, this **Environmental Impacts** bulletin describes some of the conditions affecting the future of our region.

Inland SoCal's environmental systems face challenges from urbanization, industrial activities and climate change:

- Agricultural land use in Riverside County has declined 26% since 1984 and 11% in San Bernardino County.
- Growth in the logistics industry is a key factor with a 60% increase in warehouse footprints during 2000–2010 and an additional 43% by 2020.
- Plans to balance development with open space call for conservation and management of 500,000 acres in western Riverside and 745,000 acres in the Coachella Valley.

Land Use Change (Acres)

San Bernardino: 1984–2018 | Riverside: 1986–2020



Summary of results: Over the past 40 years, farmland and grazing land in the Inland SoCal region have significantly declined while buildings and urban areas have grown.

Source: California Department of Conservation

The region's diverse ecosystems — from desert valleys to mountain ranges — highlight the need for balance between land use and environmental conservation:

- Water reliability in the Inland SoCal region faces pressures from increasing population growth, climate change-induced variability in precipitation and reductions in Colorado River flows.
- Domestic and commercial sectors consume 46% of the region's water and agriculture consumes 44%.
- Water contamination poses significant challenges with groundwater supplies especially vulnerable to pollutants due to legacy agriculture, industrial activities and natural occurrences.
- Opportunities to extract lithium alongside geothermal energy in the Salton Sea area could position the Inland SoCal region, in partnership with the Imperial Valley, as key players in global lithium supply, with minimal impacts.

Air quality has seen notable improvements over recent decades, yet levels of ozone, particulate matter (PM) 10 and PM 2.5 surpass state and federal standards in some areas, particularly in densely populated urban zones, warehousing districts and near transportation corridors.

Ongoing and potential efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and improve air quality across the region include promoting alternative travel modes, improving and increasing sales of electric vehicles, increasing energy efficiency, reducing water consumption, and offsetting carbon emissions through tree planting and landscape strategies.

Residential development trends toward suburban sprawl have also contributed significantly to land use change.

The negative consequences of this land use change include increased traffic (as a result of higher car dependency and longer commutes), strain on public services, environmental degradation (such as habitat destruction), and heightened social disparities.

Thrive Inland SoCal is building partnerships and growing the capacity needed to make a more prosperous future a reality. JOIN US in exploring the challenges and opportunities by attending an upcoming meeting.

For more details, meeting dates and contact info, visit

ThriveInlandSoCal.org

This factsheet covers one of seven key topics shaping our region's economic growth. While each topic has its own factsheet for clarity, sometimes we discuss multiple topics together to highlight how economic development is complex and connected in different ways.

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