Lesson 7

Transportation Project Development

Learning Outcomes

- Identify the various stages and activities within the transportation project development process
- Identify points within the process at which land use considerations can be introduced and considered
- Identify NEPA requirements for environmental assessment that relate to land use
- Define indirect and cumulative impacts and describe how they relate to land use

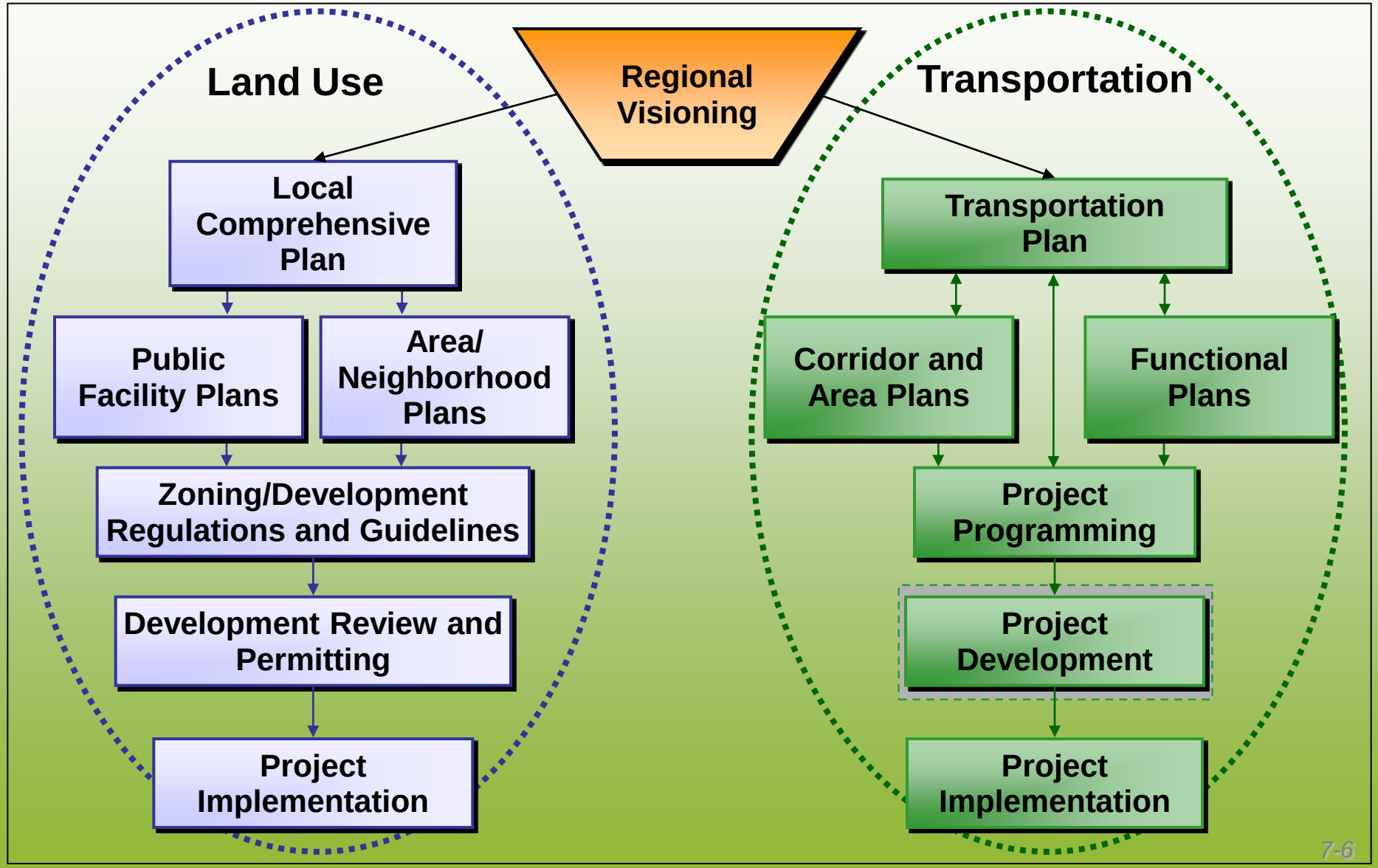
Learning Outcomes (continued)

- Identify land use and transportation project strategies that can help meet land use objectives and mitigate community and environmental impacts
- Define a "Tier 1" EIS and explain how a Tier 1 study can address land use issues
- Describe ways in which systems-level planning can be linked to project development and explain how this linkage can support transportation and land use coordination

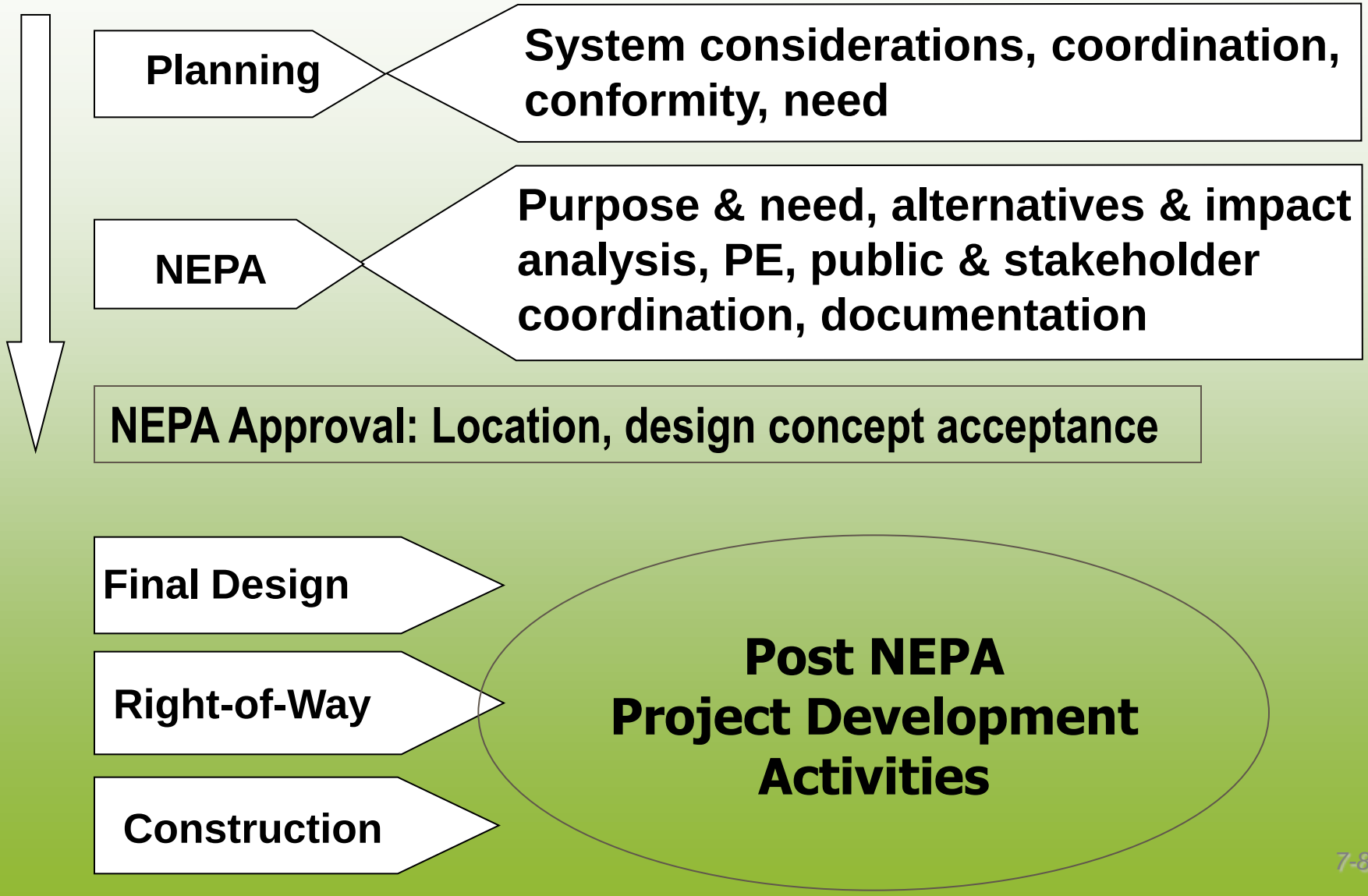
Lesson 7:
Transportation Project Development

- **7.1 The Project Development Process**
- 7.2 Linking Systems and Project-Level Planning

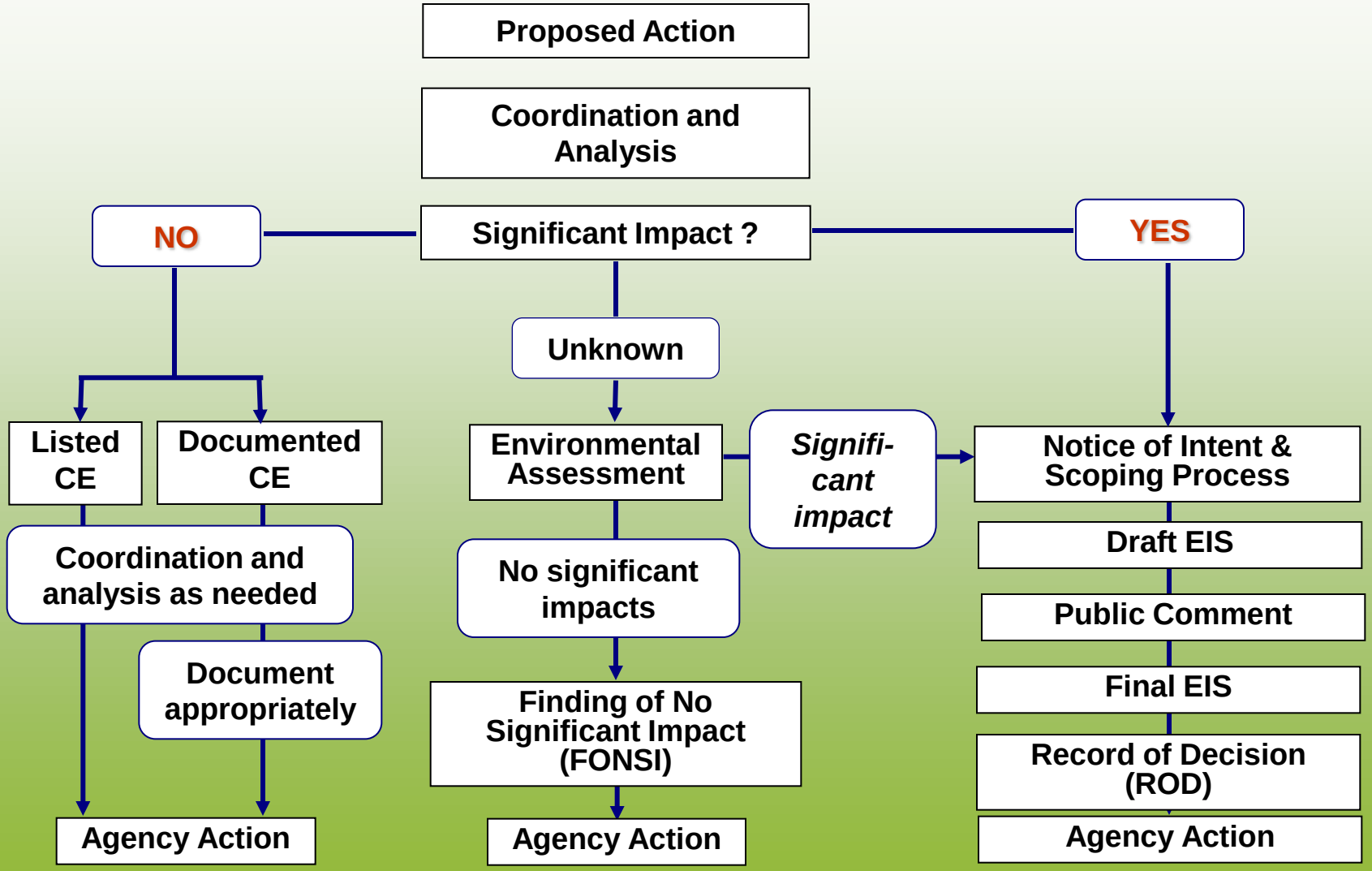
Overview of Planning Process



Project Development and NEPA



NEPA Classes of Action and the Project Development Process



NEPA – Principles/Essential Elements

- Assess **social, economic and environmental** impacts
- Analysis of a range of reasonable alternatives to the proposed project, based on purpose and need
- Consideration of appropriate impact mitigation: avoidance, minimization, restoration, preservation, compensation
- Interagency participation: coordination and consultation
- Public involvement including opportunities to comment
- Documentation and disclosure

How is Land Use Typically Addressed in NEPA?

How is Land Use Typically Addressed in NEPA?

- Description of baseline conditions
- Localized impacts – e.g., property takings, acres of farmland & parks lost to project
- Historic and archaeological sites
- Direct ecological impacts – e.g., wetlands, runoff, endangered species habitat
- Community impact assessment and environmental justice
- Indirect and cumulative impact analysis

Is There a Better Way?

Is There a Better Way?

Consider:

- Planning non-project actions consistent with the regional or corridor vision
- Conducting a corridor plan
- Designing transportation alternatives using a CSS approach
- Thoroughly analyzing indirect and cumulative impacts
- Evaluating and selecting alternatives based on consistency with land use objectives

Impacts

- Direct (primary) impacts:

  *"**Caused by the action** and occur at the same time and place…"*

- Indirect (secondary) impacts:

  *"Caused by the action and are **later in time or farther removed in distance**, but are still reasonably foreseeable…"*

- Cumulative impacts:

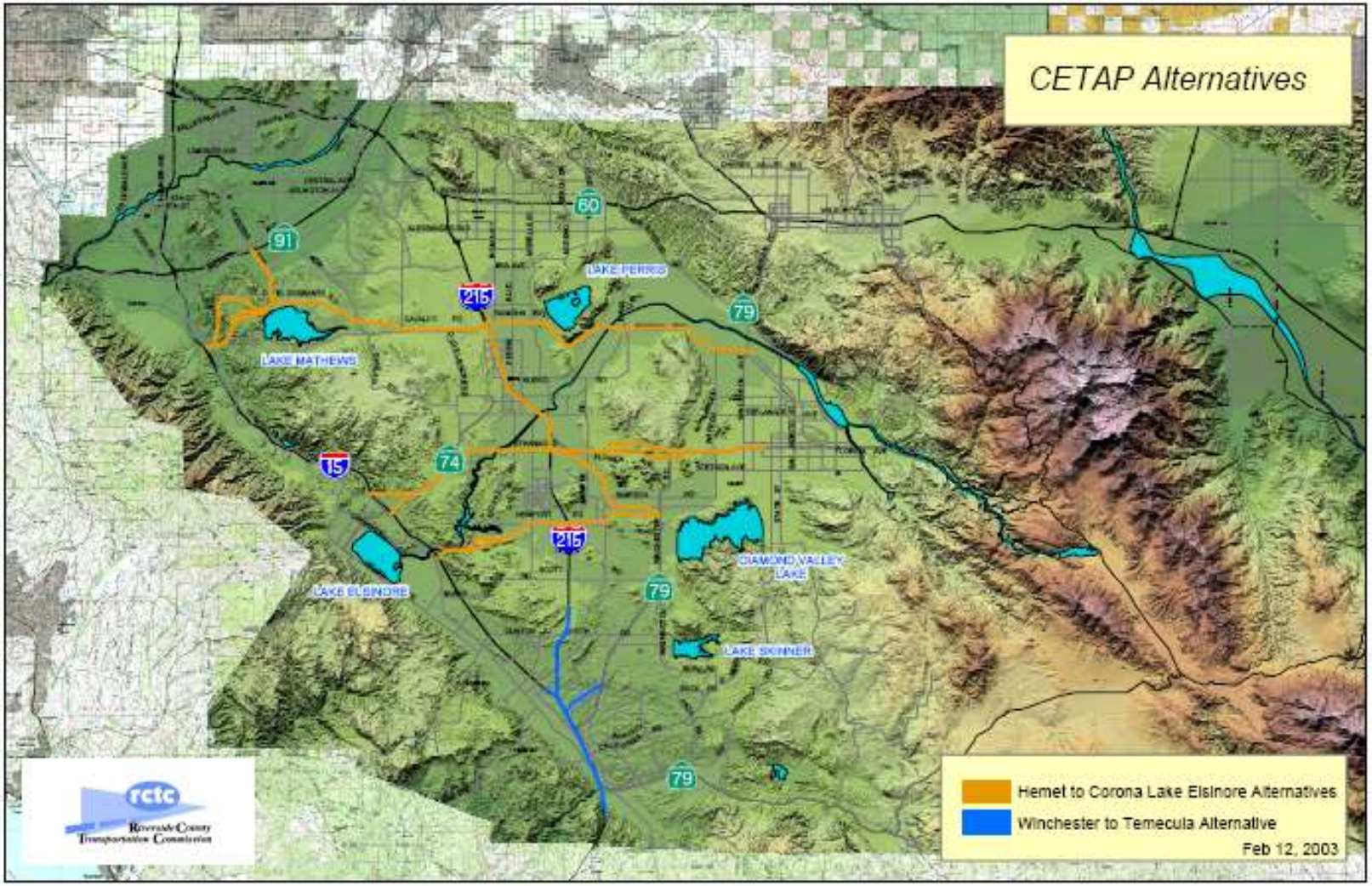
  *"The **incremental impact** of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions…"*

Tier 1 EIS & Corridor Planning

- Tier 1 EIS addresses broad programs and issues in an initial or corridor/systems level analysis
- Tier 2 EIS analyzes site-specific proposals and impacts
  - *"The [Tier 2] statement or environmental assessment need only summarize the issues discussed in the broader statement and incorporate discussions from the broader statement by reference and shall concentrate on the issues specific to the subsequent action." – Council on Environmental Quality*

Riverside County, CA

Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process



Source: Riverside County Transportation Commission

Lesson 7:
Transportation Project Development

- 7.1 The Project Development Process
- **7.2 Linking Systems & Project-Level Planning**

Best Practices

Linking Planning and NEPA

- Collect and use environmental data in the long-range transportation planning process
- Recommend projects and define alternatives consistent with regional plan
- Evaluate transportation and land use scenarios, including cumulative impacts
- Involve resource agencies in planning

Linking Project Development and Systems-Level Planning

- ☑ Is the project included in a regional plan or vision plan that addresses both transportation and land use?
- ☑ Are project characteristics consistent with the principles established in this plan or vision?
- ☑ Have the land use policies recommended in the plan or vision been adopted in the affected communities?
- ☑ Are additional land use strategies identified in the plan or vision being considered in the project alternatives?
- ☑ Are information and data from the regional planning process being used to support project development?

Additional NHI Training

NHI-142005
NEPA & Transportation Decisionmaking

NHI-142055
Advanced Seminar on Transportation Project Development: Navigating the NEPA Maze

Additional NTI Training

Advanced Seminar on Managing the Environmental Review Process

Environmental Impact Assessment (Online) Part A: NEPA as a Decision-Making Tool in Planning

Environmental Impact Assessment (Online) Part B: The Environmental Impact Statement and Related Topics

Review

- List at least four project development activities that might occur within the NEPA process
- A Tier 1 EIS addresses _____ while a Tier 2 EIS addresses _____
- List at least three checks to ensure that project development is “linked” with systems-level planning
- Describe the difference between “indirect” impacts and “cumulative” impacts