WHAT’S NEXT FOR THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

The Commission’s role as the Lead Agency under CEQA is to consider whether to certify the Final EIR, adopt Findings pursuant to CEQA, adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, and approve the Mid County Parkway Project.

As the lead agency under NEPA, FHWA would consider approval of the Final EIS and issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) for the MCP Project. FHWA will take this action if the Commission certifies the Final EIR.

Following any certification of the Final EIR, a Notice of Determination (NOD) will be filed with the County Clerk and State Clearinghouse, completing the CEQA process.

Following any certification of the Final EIR, a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be placed in area newspapers and published in the Federal Register, starting the 30 day public availability period of Final EIS. During the public availability of the environmental document, the Final EIR/EIS will be available on-line at www.midcountyparkway.org and at a number of public libraries and government offices listed on page 4.

Following issuance of an FHWA ROD, the Project can move into the Right of Way Acquisition and Design Phases. During the design phase, RCTC and FHWA will work on compliance with additional state and federal permitting requirements prior to final design, to obtain the necessary approvals to begin construction. RCTC will work closely with the Regional Conservation Authority on acquisition of properties for mitigation under the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP).

WHAT’S BEEN HAPPENING ON THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

A Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS (RDEIR/SDEIS) evaluating the modified alternatives from I-215 to SR-79 was prepared and circulated for a 75 day public review period in January 2013 and a public hearing was held in February 2013. Following completion of the public review of the RDEIR/SDEIS the Final EIR/EIS was prepared and finalized with concurrence from all the agencies (FHWA, Caltrans, USACE, USFWS, USEPA, and CDFW) involved in the MCP project.

A Final EIR/EIS has been prepared and includes the response to comments on the January 25, 2013 RDEIR/SDEIS and the Recirculated Sections of Chapter 4.0 (III, Air Quality; VII, Greenhouse Gases; 4.5, Climate Change; and Table 4.10) of the DEIR on January 31, 2014. The Final EIR/EIS identifies Alternative 9 Modified with the San Jacinto River Bridge Design Variation and the Base Case alignment through City of San Jacinto as the preferred alternative.

WHAT IS THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

The Mid County Parkway project is a proposed 16-mile transportation corridor designed to relieve local and regional traffic congestion between the cities of San Jacinto and Perris and surrounding Riverside County communities. The corridor was identified as part of the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP), a regionwide planning effort to ensure mobility and protect the environment and quality of life as our area continues to grow.

WHY IS THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY NEEDED?

In western Riverside County, another east-west transportation link such as the Mid County Parkway is essential to reduce congestion and maintain and enhance the quality of life. The Mid County Parkway will provide logical connections with north-south corridors including the SR-79 and the I-215. It will also provide more convenient access to multimodal bus and rail facilities in the city of Perris, including the new Perris Valley Line, Metrolink service that will connect Perris to Riverside.

Without the Mid County Parkway, travel times from SR-79 to I-215 are expected to be more than 45 minutes in 2040. With the Mid County Parkway, those travel times will be 15 minutes.
WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) require agencies to prepare environmental assessments of proposed projects with significant environmental effects and to circulate these documents to other agencies and the public before making decisions. The steps for each process are shown in the charts below.

WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS?

Alternatives and design variations no longer under consideration:

Alternative 1A: No Project/No Action—Existing Ground Conditions represents 2040 traffic on the planned street network without future improvements to Ramona Expressway, which would remain as it exists today. Construction of the MCP project would not be implemented.

Alternative 1B: No Project/No Action—General Plan Circulation Element Conditions is the same as Alternative 1A but includes implementation of Ramona Expressway consistent with the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element. Under Alternative 1B, Ramona Expressway would be widened to a six-lane arterial street as needed to meet expected traffic demand.

ALTERNATIVES NO LONGER UNDER CONSIDERATION

Alternative 4 Modified: North Perris (Drain) is approximately 16.3 miles long and follows a northern alignment through the city of Perris adjacent to the Perris Drain with an approximately 1.8-mile bridge along the Perris Valley Storm Drain.

Alternative 5 Modified: South Perris (Rider Street) is approximately 15.2 miles long and follows a central alignment through the city of Perris along Rider Street.

San Jacinto North Design Variation, the route diverges from the proposed alignment near Warren Road and proceeds east approximately 1,000 feet north of the existing Ramona Expressway.

Preferred alternative identified

The preferred alternative is shown in green above.

The differences in the alternatives considered in the Final EIR/EIS are shown on the map in orange above. All of the alternatives share a common alignment from Evans Road to SR-79. All of the alternatives include two design variations: the San Jacinto River Bridge Design Variation and San Jacinto North Design Variation. The preferred alternative is shown in green above.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED IN THE FINAL EIR/EIS

The alternatives for building the project all propose a limited access divided freeway with on and off ramps and three lanes in each direction. There are also freeway-to-freeway type intersections at I-215 and at SR-79. The I-215 will also be improved in the area to avoid congestion as a result of the new connection. Improvements to the I-215 include an additional lane betweenNuevo Road and Van Buren Boulevard, a new interchange at Placentia Avenue and improvements at Cajalco Road Interchange.

In areas where the alignment is located on the Ramona Expressway, the Ramona Expressway is replaced by the Mid County Parkway.

PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Expressway, the Ramona Expressway is replaced by the Mid County Parkway. Central interchanges at Placentia Avenue and improvements at Cajalco Road Interchange.

In areas where the alignment is located on the Ramona Expressway, the Ramona Expressway is replaced by the Mid County Parkway.

The Final EIR/EIS identifies Alternative 9 Modified with the San Jacinto River Bridge Design Variation and Base Case alignment through City of San Jacinto as the preferred alternative.

Preferred Alternative: Alternative 9 Modified: Placentia Avenue with the San Jacinto River Bridge Design Variation is approximately 14.3 miles long and follows a southerly alignment through the city of Perris along near Placentia Avenue and includes a depressed section approximately 1 mile long between Barrett Avenue and Wilson Avenue. At the San Jacinto River Bridge in the Lakeview Nuevo area, the Design Variation includes two bridges to cross the flood plain, with lengths of approximately 531 and 1941 feet.

ALTERNATIVES NO LONGER UNDER CONSIDERATION

Alternative 1A: No Project/No Action—Existing Ground Conditions represents 2040 traffic on the planned street network without future improvements to Ramona Expressway, which would remain as it exists today. Construction of the MCP project would not be implemented.

Alternative 1B: No Project/No Action—General Plan Circulation Element Conditions is the same as Alternative 1A but includes implementation of Ramona Expressway consistent with the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element. Under Alternative 1B, Ramona Expressway would be widened to a six-lane arterial street as needed to meet expected traffic demand.
WHO ARE THE AGENCIES PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT AND WHAT ARE THEIR ROLES?

At the local level, RCTC is the lead transportation agency. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the State of California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) are the federal and state transportation agencies.

Each agency has different responsibilities. RCTC is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). FHWA is the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in cooperation with Caltrans.

In addition, through the agency partnership agreement for the project, Federal and State resource agencies have been involved in the development of the alternatives and review of the environmental studies. This cooperative effort meets the spirit of the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP), a regionwide planning effort to ensure mobility and protect the environment.

WHERE IS THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT AVAILABLE?

For NEPA purposes, after April 17, hardcopies of the Final EIR/EIS will be available at public locations listed below and on April 24 a Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in area newspapers and Federal Register.

RCTC
4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor
Riverside, CA 92501

Caltrans District 8
464 West 4th Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Federal Highway Administration
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814-4708

For individuals with sensory disabilities, please contact us to discuss availability of the Final EIR/EIS in alternate formats. Please call or write to:
Mr. Alex Menor
Capital Projects Manager
RCTC
P.O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502-2208
(951) 787-7141

MORENO VALLEY
Moreno Valley Public Library
25480 Alessandro Boulevard
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

PERRIS PUBLIC LIBRARY
Perris Public Library
163 E. San Jacinto Avenue
Perris, CA 92570

SAN JACINTO PUBLIC LIBRARY
San Jacinto Public Library
500 Idyllwild Drive
San Jacinto, CA 92583

HOW AND WHEN WILL RCTC ACQUIRE THE PROPERTY NEEDED TO BUILD THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY?

Right of way will be acquired prior to the time of construction. RCTC must follow acquisition laws and processes to purchase the property needed for the Mid County Parkway. Appraisals will be prepared to determine fair market value for the land and improvements. RCTC will work with the property owner to reach agreement.

WHO CAN I CONTACT ABOUT THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

To receive email updates on the Mid County Parkway project, provide your email address at our website www.midcountyparkway.org or if you have questions, contact Alex Menor, RCTC Capital Projects Manager at 951-787-7141.