**FAX COVER SHEET****Community Development Department  
Planning Division****To:** Cathy Bechtel  
Riverside County  
Transportation Commission**Fax:** (951) 787-7920**From:** Moises A. Lopez  
Associate Planner**Date:** January 8, 2009**Re:** Mid County Parkway  
Draft EIR/EIS**Pages:** 4 (including this cover page)**CC:**

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|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Urgent</b>        | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reply ASAP</b>           | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Please Comment</b> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Please Review</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>For Your Information</b> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |

**Message:**

Please find enclosed the City of Riverside's comment letter with regard to the Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Mid County Parkway Project.

Should you have any questions, or if I can be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at your earliest convenience.

Moises A. Lopez, Associate Planner  
(951) 826-5264  
[mlopez@riversideca.gov](mailto:mlopez@riversideca.gov)



Community Development  
Department  
Planning Division

January 8, 2009

Ms. Cathy Bechtel  
Riverside County Transportation Commission  
4080 Lemon Street, Third Floor  
Riverside, CA 92502-2208

**SUBJECT: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
(EIR/EIS) FOR THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY (MCP) PROJECT**

Dear Ms. Bechtel:

The City of Riverside appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft EIR/EIS for the Mid County Parkway Project. The MCP project is a proposed 32-mile east-west transportation corridor between Interstate 15 in the west and State Route 79 in the east, with all of the alternatives presently under consideration traversing the City's southern sphere of influence. Consequently, City staff has thoroughly reviewed the proposal.

The City of Riverside supports the Riverside County Transportation Commission's (RCTC) effort to construct the MCP project. On December 16, 2008, the City of Riverside City Council declared its support for the MCP project as it has the potential to provide an important east-west corridor southerly of the City's limits. In addition, the City Council expressed its strong desire on the need to see the western segment of the MCP project constructed prior to the eastern segment. Similarly, steps need to be taken to improve the I-15/SR 91 interchange before adding additional traffic from the Mid County Parkway to I-15.

After reviewing the proposal, the Draft EIR/EIS does not adequately identify nor assess the full impacts of the MCP project on the City. Additional information is needed before a complete analysis can be made. To that effect, City staff offers the following comments and concerns for your review and consideration:

- When the MCP project process began, the City of Riverside General Plan anticipated a preferred alignment northerly of Alternative 9. It was expected that such an alignment would serve to divert cut-through traffic from City streets by providing City and area residents with an accessible thoroughfare readily able to connect with Interstate 15 and

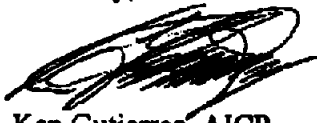
State Route 91. Consequently, Alternative 9's southern alignment restricts the ability of City and area residents to access the MCP project as it has moved substantially further south and provides the least amount of proposed connections to the local roadway network. Additional information is needed to better evaluate the impacts of this diminished connectivity to the MCP project on the City and propose appropriate mitigation to reduce those impacts to less than significant.

- The Draft EIR/EIS does not address the impacts of diversion of traffic associated with the likely phasing of the MCP project. If the easterly segment is built first with no access westerly to Interstate 15, vehicles would likely need to travel north through the City of Riverside (via Alessandro Boulevard or Van Buren Boulevard) to access State Route 91 or Interstate 15. These impacts to the City of Riverside need to be fully evaluated and mitigated;
- Additional information is needed to assess and mitigate traffic impacts on City streets, especially during the interim phases of construction. Streets such as Mockingbird Canyon Road, Wood Road, Washington Street, La Sierra Avenue, Alessandro Boulevard, and Van Buren Boulevard need to be adequately analyzed;
- Additional information is needed to assess the impacts on State Route 91 and Interstate 215, particularly during the interim phases of construction;
- Additional information is needed to assess and mitigate the MCP project's impact on the capacity of Cajalco Road and El Sobrante Road during the interim phases of construction; and
- Necessary capacity improvements need to be made to the Interstate 15/State Route 91 interchange – prior to commencing construction on the MCP project – to alleviate existing congestion and to mitigate for future traffic-related impacts associated with the MCP project.

City staff reiterates its concern that the Draft EIR/EIS has not adequately identified nor assessed the full impacts the MCP project would have on the City. Additional information and analysis is needed to fully understand the MCP project's impacts to the City so that adequate mitigation can be identified. Further, this will help the City more clearly support a preferred alternative. Absent this additional information and analysis, a thorough review is not possible. City staff looks forward to the requested information for further review and comment prior to certification of the EIR.

City staff appreciates your continued collaboration and looks forward to continue working with the RCTC and its staff. Please forward copies of all revised plans, staff reports, and environmental documents, as they pertain to this project for review. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Moises A. Lopez, Associate Planner, at (951) 826-5264 or by e-mail at [mlopez@riversideca.gov](mailto:mlopez@riversideca.gov).

Sincerely,



Ken Gutierrez, AICP  
Planning Director

c: Ronald Loveridge, Mayor  
Riverside City Council Members  
Brad Hudson, City Manager  
Belinda Graham, Interim Assistant City Manager  
Tom DeSantis, Assistant City Manger  
Scott Barber, Community Development Director  
Siobhan Foster, Public Works Director  
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