



March 21, 2013

Ms. Cathy Bechtel
 Riverside County Transportation Commission
 PO Box 12008
 Riverside, CA 92502

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RIVERSIDE COUNTY
 TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Cathy
 Dear Ms. Bechtel,

The City of San Jacinto is pleased to provide this letter in response to RCTC's recirculation of the Draft EIR/EIS for the Mid County Parkway project. The City wishes to give its support to this worthy project. We look forward to seeing the project progress beyond the environmental phase into design and ultimately construction in the near future.

As you know, the City of San Jacinto has been actively involved in the planning process for this freeway facility over many years. It is a critical project for the future of the city as well as the entire region. As touched upon in the DEIR, the City Council selected its locally preferred alternative several years ago. We would like to once again reiterate our preference for the more southerly alignment of the MCP within San Jacinto's corporate boundaries (as opposed to the San Jacinto North Design Variation). The southerly alignment, which the DEIR presents as the city's preferred alternative, has the support of the City Council, local land owners and the development community. Furthermore, it has less impact on the San Jacinto River floodplain and its alignment is almost entirely on vacant land.

R-2-1

Since the MCP is such a large project, it is almost certain to be built in phases. This reality is acknowledged in the DEIR. In 2009, the City Council adopted a resolution encouraging RCTC to initiate work on the MCP at its eastern terminus, beginning in San Jacinto and heading west toward Lakeview. There is an opportunity to construct the improvements on the realignment of State Route 79 and the Mid County Parkway (which are both RCTC projects) at the same time. Doing so would have a number of benefits, such as: a lower total cost for the ultimate facilities; less impact to drivers local residents and businesses, since work would be done in one phase rather than multiple phases over many years; and no construction of "throwaway" improvements on either State Route 79 or the Mid County Parkway. We ask that RCTC strongly consider this approach to the Parkway's construction.

R-2-2

We note that per the DEIR, phase one of MCP construction primarily consists of widening the existing Ramona Expressway to four lanes between Perris' easterly city limit and San Jacinto's westerly city limit, making a continuous four lane highway from I-215 to SR 79. While we maintain our request that work begin in San Jacinto, we also recognize that this is a worthwhile starting point for the project, as it will eliminate the existing choke point where Ramona Expressway narrows to just two lanes in unincorporated Riverside County. It is our hope and request that RCTC will move forward with this work in a timely manner regardless of the progress of adjacent private land development. Should the work on Ramona Expressway come first, we presume that the cost of the widening can be recaptured via development impact fees.

R-2-3

One additional item that the City would like RCTC to review is the sizing of Wildlife Undercrossing Location 10. The City's Trails Master Plan identifies a future equestrian trail that would run roughly parallel and to the west of Warren Rd, then meander northwesterly on the south side of Ramona Expressway all the way to the San Jacinto city limit near Bridge Street. At this point it would be possible to make a connection to the planned Wildlife Undercrossing Structure and ultimately north to the De Anza National Historic Trail along the San Jacinto River.

R-2-4

The current proposed size of the Wildlife Undercrossing Structure is not tall enough to accommodate a horse, rider and additional space should the horse get spooked and rear. As a result, riders will be required to get off the horse and walk the horse through the Corridor. Increasing the size of the Wildlife Undercrossing Structure, if feasible, is appreciated.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the MCP project. We look forward to its successful completion in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Tim Hults
City Manager