WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

The studies for the Mid County Parkway are now complete. The Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS) describes alternatives for the project, the impacts from each of the alternatives, and the proposed avoidance, minimization and/or mitigation measures for these impacts. During the public circulation of the environmental document, the studies are available on-line at www.midcountyparkway.org and at a number of public libraries and government offices (see page 4).

PUBLIC HEARING:

An open house style public hearing on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS is scheduled for February 20, 2013. There will be no formal presentation at this meeting, however, the public is invited to make oral comments to a court reporter. Written comments will be accepted at the meeting and throughout the public comment period ending on March 11, 2013.

February 20, 2013, 5:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Lakeside Middle School
27720 Walnut Street, Perris, CA 92571

After comments are received from the public and the participating agencies, FHWA, Caltrans, and RCTC will prepare a Final EIR/EIS. The Final EIR/EIS will include responses to the comments received on the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS.
In October 2008, a Draft EIR/EIS was released evaluating the alternatives for the Mid County Parkway, originally proposed as a 32-mile corridor stretching from San Jacinto through Perris to Corona. Public information open houses and public hearings were held in October and November 2008 to collect comments on the Draft EIR/EIS. Public comments submitted on the Draft EIR/EIS raised environmental and community concerns regarding the portion of the project between I-15 and I-215. These comments helped focus the project to make the best use of limited transportation dollars while addressing the most immediate traffic needs. In response to the comments, RCTC took action on July 8, 2009 to reduce the length of the project and focus improvements between I-215 and SR-79. The Mid County Parkway project is now a proposed 16-mile transportation corridor intended to relieve local and regional traffic congestion in the San Jacinto and Perris areas and surrounding Riverside County communities.

The alternatives for building the project all propose a divided highway with on and off ramps and three lanes in each direction. There are also freeway-to-freeway type interchanges 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.

All of the alternatives share a common alignment from Evans Road to SR-79, identified in green on the map above. In areas where the alignment is located on the Ramona Expressway, the Ramona Expressway is replaced by the Mid County Parkway. All of the alternatives also include two design variations: the San Jacinto River Bridge Design Variation and San Jacinto North Design Variation.

Under the San Jacinto Bridge Design Variation, a different bridge configuration is considered at the San Jacinto River in the Lakeview-Nuevo area. Under the 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.

The differences in the alternatives are shown on the map in orange above and are described further below:

**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.

**Alternative 9 Modified: Placentia Avenue** 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.

Environmental evaluation of projects like the Mid County Parkway requires the development of alternative approaches to the design and construction of the project. These different scenarios for building a project are then studied and compared, their environmental effects are documented, and solutions to any impacts are specified. Project alternatives must also include an evaluation of the effects of not building the project at all, called a “No Build” alternative.
WHAT IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS?

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.

**DEFINITION OF A PARKWAY:**

A parkway is a divided highway with on and off ramps. The “facility” is designed to freeway/expressway standards as defined in Caltrans Highway Design Manual (HDM).

The photo at right shows an example of what the parkway may look like. The number of lanes for the Mid County Parkway would be three in each direction, and includes a wide open median.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) launched

Environmental Streamlining Executive Order signed for RCIP projects

Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) launched

RCTC approves start of environmental studies for the Mid County Parkway

Environmental studies began

RCTC focuses project on eastern portion between SR-79 and I-215

Preliminary project alternatives established

Update studies for focused project

Project alternatives refined

Draft EIR/EIS released for 32-mile project

Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS released

Final EIR/EIS

RCCTC approves start of environmental studies for the Mid County Parkway

Public outreach meetings (3)

(scoping meeting)

Newsletter

Public outreach meeting

Public hearings (2)

Notice of Preparation

Draft EIR

State Clearinghouse Review

Public and Agency Review

Final EIR

Review of Responses by Commenting Agencies

Agency Decision

Findings; Statement of Overriding Consideration; Mitigation Monitoring Program

Notice of Preparation

Scoping

Draft EIS

EPA Filing; Federal Register

Final EIS

Public and Agency review; EPA Filing; Federal Register Notice

Agency Decision

Record of Decision

Parkway

You Are Here

Public hearing

Public outreach meetings (4)

Website, newsletter

Newsletter

Public outreach meetings (3)

Newsletter

Public outreach meetings (3)

Newsletter

Final EIR/EIS

Final design

Right of way acquisition

Construction

WHERE IS THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT AVAILABLE?

The Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS is available at the locations below and also on the internet at: www.midcountyparkway.org.

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

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

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

San Jacinto Public Library
500 Idyllwild Drive
San Jacinto, CA 92583

For individuals with sensory disabilities, please contact us to discuss availability of the Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS in alternate formats. Please call or write to:
Ms. Cathy Bechtel,
RCTC
P. O. Box 12008
Riverside, CA 92502-2208
(951) 787-7141

WHO CAN I CONTACT ABOUT THE MID COUNTY PARKWAY PROJECT?

If you have comments or questions about the Mid County Parkway, email us at our website at www.midcountyparkway.org or call Cathy Bechtel, Project Development Director for RCTC at 951-787-7141.

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

Right of way will be acquired close to the time of construction. RCTC must follow public laws and processes to purchase the property needed for the Mid County Parkway. Appraisals will be done near the time of needed acquisition and fair market value for the land will be offered. RCTC will work with the property owner to reach a fair price.

WHO ARE THE AGENCIES EVALUATING 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 Environmental Streamlining Executive Order that came about as a result of the Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP), a regionwide planning effort to ensure mobility and protect the environment.