

Notice of Preparation



To: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
 (Agency)
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814
 (Address)
Attn: Mr. Scott Morgan

SEP 10 2004

GARY L. ORSO
 By: *[Signature]* C. Kohler
 Deputy

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency:	Consulting Firm (If applicable):
Agency Name <u>California Department of Transportation</u> (Department)	Firm Name <u>CH2M HILL</u>
Street Address <u>464 West Fourth Street</u>	Street Address <u>3 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 200</u>
City/State/Zip <u>San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400</u>	City/State/Zip <u>Santa Ana, CA 92707</u>
Contact <u>Marie J. Petry</u>	Contact <u>Carolyn Washburn</u>

California Department of Transportation (Department) will be the Lead Agency and will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency will need to use the EIS/EIR prepared by our agency when considering your permit or other approval for the project.

It has been determined in accordance with Division 13, Public Resources Code, Section 21080(d) that there is substantial evidence that the project may have a significant effect on the environment. The implementation of the project potentially may result in significant impacts on aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities and services systems. The joint EIS/EIR for the proposed project will address the complete list of environmental topics contained in Appendix G of the 2004 California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

Based on the potential significant effects identified above, no initial study is required. California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15060(d) states:

If the lead agency can determine that an EIR will be clearly required for a project, the agency may skip further initial review of the project and begin work directly on the EIR process described in Article 9. In the absence of an initial study, the lead agency shall still focus the EIR on the significant effects of the project and indicate briefly its reasons for determining that other effects would not be significant or potentially significant.

Due to the time limits mandated by state law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but **not later than 30 days** after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to: Agency Name Riverside County Transportation Commission
 Street Address 4080 Lemon Street, 3rd Floor
 City/State/Zip Riverside, CA 92501
 Contact Hideo Sugita
 Telephone: (951) 787-7141 E-mail: hsugita@etc.org

COUNTY CLERK
 Declaration/Ntc Determination
 Filed per P.R.C. 21152
 POSTED
 SEP 10 2004
 OCT 12 2004
 Removed:
 By: *[Signature]* Dept.
 County of Riverside, State of California

We will need the name for a contact person in your agency. Project documents are available for review on the project website, located at <http://www.sr79project.info>. This website contains project information and will be updated as the project progresses.

A project scoping meeting will be held in Hemet on Wednesday, September 29, 2004 at the James Simpson Memorial Center (305 E. Devonshire Avenue) beginning at 6:30 p.m. and in San Jacinto on Wednesday, October 6, 2004 at the San Jacinto Unified School District conference room (2045 San Jacinto Avenue) beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Project Location: The proposed project is located in western Riverside County and includes that portion of SR 79 2 kilometers (km) south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road. The proposed project will occur in the community of Winchester, the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto, as well as unincorporated Riverside County.

City (nearest)

County

Project Description: (brief)

The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in cooperation with District 8 of the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the County of Riverside, the City of San Jacinto, and the City of Hemet, will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the realignment of State Route (SR) 79 (Project) in the vicinity of the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto in Riverside County, California. The realignment is proposed to occur 2 km south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road.

A range of alignment alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS/EIR. Alignment alternatives in the western, central, and eastern portions of the project area were identified through an alternatives analysis process described in detail in the Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection for Preliminary Agreement (June 22, 2004); and these alignment alternatives will be analyzed.

The western alignment begins at the southern project limit along Winchester Road, approximately 2 km south of Domenigoni Parkway. It continues north crossing Domenigoni Parkway and Salt Creek Channel, ½-mile east of Winchester Road. The alignment then turns east and parallels Florida Avenue on the south before turning north, paralleling and then crossing the San Diego Canal near Esplanade Avenue. North of Esplanade Avenue, the western alignment continues in a northeast direction and splits into two potential alignments, one following Odell Avenue and one paralleling the Casa Loma Canal, before reconnecting immediately south of the intersection of Sanderson Avenue and North Ramona Boulevard. The western alignment continues north on Sanderson Avenue and crosses Ramona Expressway to the San Jacinto River.

The central alignment begins at the southern project limit along Winchester Road and continues in a northeast direction crossing Domenigoni Parkway and continuing east paralleling Salt Creek Channel. It then travels north, east of the San Diego Canal. North of Devonshire Avenue, the central alignment will occur on top of Warren Road, west of Tres Cerritos Hills to Seventh Street. Then the alignment heads northeast to parallel the Casa Loma Canal until Sanderson Avenue. Then, the central alignment continues north, east of Sanderson Avenue, and crosses Ramona Expressway to the San Jacinto River.

The eastern alignment begins at the southern project limit along Winchester Road and continues north, turning northeast after crossing the Salt Creek Channel. The alignment continues northeast paralleling the railroad tracks until Sanderson Avenue. Northeast of the Hemet-Ryan Airport, the eastern alignment turns north in the vicinity of Sanderson Avenue. The alignment continues north along Sanderson Avenue and crosses Ramona Expressway to the San Jacinto River.

The above described realignment alternatives will be further refined through efforts conducted under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Integration Process, incorporating comments from the public scoping process, as well as analysis in technical studies. In addition to the build alternatives, a no-build alternative also will be reviewed in the EIS/EIR as required by NEPA and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations.

Date _____

Signature _____

Title _____

Telephone _____

Reference: California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines) Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.

January 2000



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit



Arnold
Schwarzenegger
Governor

Jan Boel
Acting Director

Notice of Preparation

September 9, 2004

To: Reviewing Agencies

Re: State Route 79 Project
SCH# 2004091040

Attached for your review and comment is the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the State Route 79 Project draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Responsible agencies must transmit their comments on the scope and content of the NOP, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility, within 30 days of receipt of the NOP from the Lead Agency. This is a courtesy notice provided by the State Clearinghouse with a reminder for you to comment in a timely manner. We encourage other agencies to also respond to this notice and express their concerns early in the environmental review process.

Please direct your comments to:

Marie J. Petry
Department of Transportation, District 8
464 W. 4th Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401-1400

with a copy to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research. Please refer to the SCH number noted above in all correspondence concerning this project.

If you have any questions about the environmental document review process, please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613.

Sincerely,


Scott Morgan
Project Analyst, State Clearinghouse

**Document Details Report
State Clearinghouse Data Base**

SCH# 2004091040
Project Title State Route 79 Project
Lead Agency Caltrans #8

Type NOP Notice of Preparation

Description The Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), in cooperation with District 8 of the California Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the County of Riverside, the City of San Jacinto, and the City of Hemet, will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the realignment of State Route (SR) 79 (Project) in the vicinity of the cities of Hemet and San Jacinto in Riverside County, California. The realignment is proposed to occur 2 km south of Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road. A range of alignment alternatives will be analyzed in the EIS/EIR. Alignment alternatives in the western, central, and eastern portions of the project area were identified through an alternatives analysis process described in detail in the Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection for Preliminary Agreement (June 22, 2004); and these alignment alternatives will be analyzed.

Lead Agency Contact

Name Marie J. Petry
Agency Department of Transportation, District 8
Phone (909) 383-4808 **Fax**
email
Address 464 W. 4th Street
City San Bernardino **State** CA **Zip** 92401-1400

Project Location

County Riverside
City Hemet, San Jacinto
Region
Cross Streets Domenigoni Parkway; Gilman Springs Road

Parcel No.	Range	Section	Base
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Proximity to:

Highways SR 79
Airports
Railways
Waterways
Schools
Land Use

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Agricultural Land; Air Quality; Biological Resources; Archaeologic-Historic; Toxic/Hazardous; Water Quality; Landuse; Noise; Public Services; Recreation/Parks; Traffic/Circulation

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Office of Historic Preservation; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; Department of Fish and Game, Region 6; Native American Heritage Commission; Public Utilities Commission; State Lands Commission; California Highway Patrol; Air Resources Board, Transportation Projects; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 8

Date Received 09/09/2004 **Start of Review** 09/09/2004 **End of Review** 10/08/2004