



COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE
NOTICE OF PREPARATION FOR A DRAFT PROGRAM
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Date: February 25, 2008
 To: Responsible and Trustee Agencies/Interested Organizations and Individuals
 Project: Public Safety Enterprise Communication (PSEC) Project

Lead Agency

County of Riverside
 Department of Facilities Management
 P.O. Box 789
 Riverside, CA 92502-0789
 Email: EIR@co.riverside.ca.us
 Project website: <http://psec.co.riverside.ca.us>



Consultant Firm Preparing the Draft EIR

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This Notice of Preparation (NOP) includes a summary project description and a list of the environmental issues to be examined in the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Public Safety Enterprise Communication (PSEC) project.

The environmental determination in this Notice of Preparation is subject to a 30-day public review period per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Public Resources Code §21080.4 and CEQA Guidelines §15082. Public agencies, interested organizations, and individuals have the opportunity to comment on the proposed project and identify those environmental issues that they believe have the potential to be affected by the project and should be addressed by the County of Riverside (County) in the EIR.

The public review period for this NOP is February 28, 2008 to March 31, 2008. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Project Purpose and Need

The County of Riverside's fire and law enforcement agencies currently utilize approximately 20 communication sites to provide voice and data transmission capabilities to assigned personnel in the field. As currently configured, the system provides coverage to only about 60 percent of the County. The communication system now in use is at the end of its useful life, and is no longer adequate to meet the County's coverage and capacity needs. Population growth within the County is necessitating the expansion of the coverage footprint. Additionally, due to increases in the

County's radio usage, additional traffic-carrying capacity is required to meet the needs of emergency services personnel as they serve the public. The proposed project is the expansion of the system's capabilities and its associated infrastructure. The new system is urgently needed to ensure the safety of firefighters, law enforcement officers, and the public.

Project Description

The PSEC project would expand the County's radio tower network from the current 20 sites to approximately 70 sites throughout the County. Some sites are located outside of the County including sites in San Bernardino, San Diego and Orange counties. These sites are necessary to provide coverage in the more remote areas of the County. The expansion will increase the operational coverage of the emergency services telecommunications system to approximately 95 percent of the County's land area, and will also provide greatly expanded voice and data transmission capability. The new system will also provide coverage in high priority buildings, such as courthouses, jail facilities, sheriff, and fire stations. Design, approval, and construction of the network is projected to take two to three years.

To meet the coverage requirements of the project, it is likely that an additional 50 tower sites will need to be constructed region-wide. **A map showing the locations of existing and proposed facilities is attached.** Tower sites would be typical of existing County communications facilities. **A series of photographs of typical facilities is also attached.** The sites would be composed of a steel tower, an equipment building, and necessary electrical and road access. The typical site footprint would be approximately 100 feet by 100 feet. The extent of ground disturbance associated with each site generally falls into one of two categories. Each type is described below:

Type A: New Build/Existing Disturbed Area

Most of the proposed sites fall within this category. In these situations, towers would be constructed adjacent to existing "antennae farms" or other telecommunication facilities, or in other previously disturbed areas adjacent to existing roadways. In this manner, ground disturbance would be minimized and the construction of new roads, powerlines, and other significant infrastructure would be largely avoided. In most cases, ground disturbance would be limited to that area required for the construction of the tower and equipment building.

Type B: New Build/Non-Disturbed Area

This category includes sites that are on undisturbed raw land with no preexisting facilities or infrastructure. Sites within this category would require the construction of new towers, equipment buildings, new or improved roads, and electrical transmission lines. For several of the more remote sites, the provision of commercial power is not practical. In these cases, the electricity required to serve the sites will be generated onsite using solar panels and/or diesel/propane-powered generators.

Detailed location information for each proposed site can be found in **Table 1**. The information provided includes the latitude, longitude, Assessor's Parcel Number (APN), the relative location of each site, ownership information, the proposed tower height, and the type of build (Type A or B as described above).

Environmental Issues to be Evaluated in the EIR

Given the broad geographic nature of the project and the variety of environmental issues that could be encountered with a project of this type, the County has determined that a Program EIR will be prepared for the project. The EIR will evaluate each of the applicable impact issue areas listed in the CEQA Guidelines and provided below:

Aesthetics
Air Quality
Biological Resources
Cultural Resources
Geology and Soils

Hazards and Hazardous Materials
Hydrology and Water Resources
Land Use and Planning
Noise

The EIR will assess the project's potential environmental impacts for each of the issues listed above. Where necessary, mitigation measures will be identified that can lessen the project's impacts. A final determination of the significance of the impact (i.e., no impact, less than significant impact, and significant impact) will be made.

The EIR will be used by the County to gain an understanding of the project's environmental impacts. Since components of this project are located on lands not under the direct jurisdiction of the County, the EIR will also be used by other agencies and jurisdictions to guide their decision-making processes. For those sites that are proposed for construction on federal lands (Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service), appropriate environmental review will be undertaken by those agencies (or their designees) to comply with provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Opportunity to Comment

Agencies, organizations, and individuals have the opportunity to comment on the scope and content of the environmental issues to be included in the EIR. Agencies, organizations, and individuals making written comments may do so within the NOP response period. E-mailed comments will also be accepted, using the contact information provided below. The County has also developed a website for the project. Visitors to the site may provide comments there, and the site will also contain useful information that will be updated as the project moves forward.

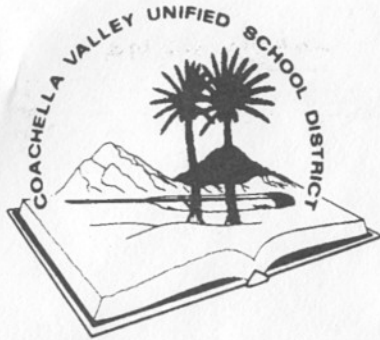
Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date, but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice. Please include the name, phone number, and address of your organization's contact person with your response. **Please note that the NOP review/response period will be February 28, 2008 through March 31, 2008.**

All comments should be directed to:

County of Riverside
Department of Facilities Management
ATTN: Ms. Ashley Mitchell
P.O. Box 789
Riverside, CA 92502-0789
Email: EIR@co.riverside.ca.us
Website: <http://psec.co.riverside.ca.us>

We have no objection to the project mentioned above. The Coachella Valley Unified School District is authorized by State Legislature and Judicial Actions to levy a developer fee on new residential and commercial/industrial developments.

At this time, however, we cannot make a final determination on the school fee until additional information is provided by the applicant. Because of severe overcrowding at the school district, it is important that the developer contact the school district to determine the specific impact of its development on our schools.



P.O. Box 847 • Thermal, California 92274

FACILITIES DEPARTMENT

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