



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING NOTICE

**Date:** October 27, 2009  
**Subject:** Notice of Intent to Prepare Draft Environmental Impact Report  
**Project Title:** **Riverside North Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project**  
**Lead Agency:** **City of Riverside**  
**Address:** 3901 Orange Street, Riverside, California, 92501  
**City Contact:** **Max Rasouli**      **Phone:** (951) 826-5574

The City of Riverside (Riverside) has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is necessary for the Riverside North Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Project (the "Project") in the City of Colton. Riverside is the Lead Agency for the Project and will prepare the EIR under the terms and requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the implementing Guidelines of the California Environmental Quality Act ("Guidelines"). In addition, the City of Colton (Colton) is considered a responsible agency due to the location of the Project properties.

The purpose of this notice is: (1) to serve as the Notice of Preparation to potential Responsible Agencies, Federal agencies involved in funding or approving the project, and Trustee Agencies responsible for natural resources affected by the project, pursuant to Section 15082 of the *CEQA Guidelines*; and (2) to advise and solicit comments and suggestions regarding the preparation of the EIR, environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR, and any related issues, from interested parties other than those noted above, including interested or affected members of the public. Riverside requests that any potential Responsible or Trustee Agency responding to this notice respond in a manner consistent with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082(b).

The Project description, location, and an analysis indicating the probable environmental effects of the proposed action are contained in the attached materials. Additional Project information is available for review at the City of Riverside Public Utilities Department address shown above.

Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.4 and *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082(b), Responsible Agencies must submit any comments in response to this notice not later than **30 days after receipt**. All parties that have submitted their names and mailing addresses will be notified as part of the current Project's CEQA review process. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list or have any questions or need additional information, please contact the person identified above. Riverside will accept **written** comments from Agencies and interested parties regarding this notice through the close of business on **December 1, 2009 (submit written comments to the address provided above)**.



**PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING**

Two separate public scoping meetings will be held on **November 17, 2009**, including a brief Project overview and discussion of environmental issue areas. Information regarding these meetings is provided below:

Date	Time	Location
November 17, 2009	2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Riverside Public Utilities 3901 Orange Street Riverside CA, 92501
November 17, 2009	6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	Gonzalez Community Center 670 Colton Avenue Colton, CA 92324

Any interested parties may attend to gain a better understanding of the Project and to identify environmental issues of concern. However, it is not necessary to attend both meetings, as the information provided will be the same.

Submitted by:

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Max Rasouli  
Water Resources Manager  
City of Riverside  
Public Utilities Department

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Ruth Villalobos  
Vice President  
RBF Consulting

# NOTICE OF PREPARATION

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## Riverside North Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project

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### LEAD AGENCY:

**City of Riverside**  
Public Utilities Department  
3901 Orange Street  
Riverside, CA 92501

**Contact: Max Rasouli, Water Resources Manager**  
(951) 826-5574

### RESPONSIBLE AGENCY:

City of Colton  
650 N. La Cadena Drive  
Colton, CA 92324

**Contact: Mark Nuaimi, Assistant City Manager**  
(909) 370-5051

### Consultant:



**RBF Consulting**  
3300 East Guasti Road, Suite 100  
Ontario, CA 91761

October 27, 2009



## **I. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING**

The proposed Project is located in the southern portion of the City of Colton; refer to Exhibit 1, *Regional Location Map*, and north of the City of Grand Terrace. The Project site is located south of the Interstate 10 and East M Street, west of the Interstate 215 and Santa Ana River, and east of the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. The Project abuts the Santa Ana River as it trends south and bends westward through this part of the watershed. The Project site is currently surrounded by undeveloped properties to the north and west and the Cooley Ranch Planned Development to the east (on the east side of the Santa Ana River); refer to Exhibit 2, *Project Vicinity Map*.

Roadways providing vehicular access to the Project site include East Congress Street, South Fogg Street, and Mt. Vernon Avenue. Currently, the Project site consists of vacant land with several dirt roads crossing the Project site and several water wells owned and operated by the City of Riverside Public Utilities Department. In addition, a Southern California Edison Substation is located to the northeast of the Project area. Electrical transmission tower easements associated with this facility traverse the Project area and surrounding properties in a north-south direction.

## **II. BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

In March of 1992, the City of San Bernardino, Orange County Water District, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, and Western Municipal Water District agreed to conduct a study to develop conjunctive-use alternatives for integrating the management of imported water, recycled water, and stormwater for water users that have access to groundwater in the Riverside and Colton groundwater basins<sup>1</sup>. In July of 2001, Project Agreement 16 – Riverside/Colton Water Resources Management Task Force prepared a reconnaissance-level investigation of the Riverside/Colton Basins Water Resources Management Program. This document outlined the four proposed alternatives from the Plan initiated in 1992, the current conditions of the Riverside/Colton Basins, new project alternatives based on current conditions, and a recommended implementation strategy to achieve these alternatives.

As a result of these previous studies and current environmental and economic factors, Riverside, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District, Western Municipal Water District, and Colton, have embarked on implementation of a project that meets the purpose and intent of one of the alternatives originally conceived in the Project Agreement 16 study.

## **III. PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

The Riverside North Aquifer Storage and Recovery Project is an endeavor by Riverside and its Project partners, San Bernardino Valley Municipal Water District (SBVMWD), Western Municipal Water District (WMWD), and the City of Colton. The Project is designed as a conjunctive use project, which includes the construction of groundwater recharge facilities (inflatable rubber dam, groundwater recharge basins, and conveyance pipelines), a community park (includes passive recreational trails, water features, and a pedestrian bridge over the Santa Ana River), and needed infrastructure improvements such as the realignment of Fogg Street, provision of a 32-foot wide utility corridor across the Santa Ana River (contained within the rubber dam footprint), and reservation of right of way for an eventual railroad line re-alignment

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<sup>1</sup> Project Agreement 16, Riverside/ Colton Water Resources Management Task Force



Riverside, WMWD and SBVMWD are all parties to the lawsuit entitled *Western Municipal Water District et al. vs. East San Bernardino County Water District et al.* [Riverside County Superior Court No. 784726, April 17, 1969 (the “1969 Western Judgment”)]. The 1969 Western Judgment sets forth a declaration of rights of the water users and other entities in the Lower Area of the Santa Ana River Basin downstream of Prado Dam against those in the Upper Area of the Santa Ana River that are tributary to Prado Dam. The 1969 Western Judgment provided a physical solution to satisfy those rights. Under the 1969 Western Judgment, WMWD and SBVMWD are obligated to recharge the Riverside Basin based on certain parameters. This proposed Project improves the ability of WMWD and SBVMWD to better meet that obligation.

The Project's intended purpose includes construction/expansion of infrastructure within the Project area, development of recreational facilities on the portion of the Project owned by Colton, improvement of groundwater quality within the Riverside and Colton groundwater basins, and the creation of additional groundwater recharge basins along the Santa Ana River. The proposed location is ideal due to the water quality conditions within this reach of the Santa Ana River and lack of wastewater effluent discharge upstream of this location. Further downstream, several wastewater treatment plants discharge into the river, which affects groundwater recharge viability.

The Project proposes to accomplish these objectives by providing the availability of three potential sources of recharge water: State Water Project (“SWP”) water<sup>2</sup>, Santa Ana River storm flows, and the Riverside Canal. The proposed Project would also replenish groundwater in close proximity to the recently completed City of Colton Wells 30 and 31, Riverside Highland Water Company wells located east of the river, and Riverside’s flume wells, which will convey supply directly to the John W. North Water Treatment Plant. Finally, groundwater quality would be improved through the impoundment and recharge of better quality Santa Ana River storm water.

As described above, the proposed Project is characterized by three main components that will be developed as part of Project implementation; refer to Exhibit 3, *Proposed Project Limits*. The following are descriptions of these components:

In-Stream Recharge Component

The “In-Stream” Recharge Component is the portion of the proposed Project that will be constructed within the Santa Ana River channel. This component will provide opportunities for groundwater recharge to occur within the Santa Ana River channel as water is impounded behind an inflatable dam. To accomplish this, the Project proposes the construction of an inflatable dam across the Santa Ana River channel, which can be raised and lowered depending on the amount of water flowing down the river. Current Project concepts indicate that the proposed dam would span approximately 700 feet across the Santa Ana River and dam height is expected to be between six (6) and ten (10) feet. For planning purposes, the area anticipated to be covered by water impounded behind the inflatable dam is approximately twenty (20) to twenty-five (25) acres. This impoundment area is expected to allow for between 5,000 and 9,000 acre-feet per year<sup>3</sup> of groundwater recharge, from the Santa Ana River. The installation of the inflatable dam on the Santa Ana River will take approximately two to three years including design, manufacturing, and construction.

In addition to construction of the inflatable dam, other improvements will be required as part of the In-Stream Recharge Component, including the following:

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<sup>2</sup> At this time the City of Riverside is not proposing recharge of State Water Project water.  
<sup>3</sup> Dependant on hydrologic conditions within the river and amount of rainfall within a given year.



- Removal/Reconstruction of approximately 100 lineal feet (LF) of new levees downstream of the proposed dam location;
- Modification of approximately 2,400 LF of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers levees upstream of the proposed dam location;
- Construction of a water diversion structure through the west levees north of the proposed recharge basins; and
- Miscellaneous rip-rap/energy-dissipater devices downstream of the proposed dam location to reduce the potential for erosion at the base of the dam structure. For planning purposes, the Project assumes approximately 100 feet downstream of the proposed dam structure will be required to accommodate these materials/devices.

#### Off-Stream Recharge Component

As proposed, the Project would construct groundwater recharge basins on the west side of the river, behind the existing levees currently forming the river's western edge. When the proposed dam is fully inflated, the water impounded behind the dam would be diverted into the proposed off-stream recharge basins. These basins are estimated to recharge between 1,000 and 6,000 acre-feet per year<sup>4</sup> of water (approximately six (6) months out of the year) to replenish the groundwater aquifer within the Colton/ Riverside groundwater basin. The preliminary design of the groundwater recharge basins involves up to eight (8) individual recharge basins arranged sequentially encompassing approximately twenty-four (24) acres. It is anticipated that the depths of these basins will range from six (6) to eleven (11) feet and be connected in series with pipes and gate structures.

To ensure that the basins do not overflow and impact adjacent areas, an outlet in the southernmost basin would connect back into the Santa Ana River, allowing conveyance of overflow water back into the river. Implementation of this component will require the construction of a diversion structure and de-silting basin that connects the recharge basins to the area behind the dam. The diversion structure will require modification to the levees north of the proposed basin area, which is discussed in the In-Stream Recharge component discussion above.

#### Other Project Components

##### *State Water Project Pipeline*

The State Water Project component of the proposed Project includes the construction of conveyance facilities (24-inch diameter pipeline, pumps, and valves) to connect the proposed groundwater recharge basins to the State Water Project turnout located on the east bank of the river channel, south of the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way. Exhibit 3, *Proposed Project Limits*, identifies a preliminary alignment option for this Project component. It is anticipated that this Project component would cross the river below the inflatable dam location, or another suitable location depending on feasibility. In addition, a hydro-generating facility may be installed as part of these improvements, if deemed economically beneficial. For purposes of this EIR, this pipeline alignment has been included; however Riverside is not proposing to use State Water Project water for recharge purposes at this time.

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<sup>4</sup> Dependant on hydrologic conditions within the river and amount of rainfall within a given year.



*Utility Crossing*

As part of the dam construction, the Project would include the construction of a 32 foot wide utility corridor that could accommodate utility lines across the Santa Ana River. At this time this corridor is anticipated to be co-located within the footprint of the inflatable dam and improvements. The purpose of this corridor is to provide an area for additional wet and dry utilities to cross the river and provide redundant utility connections in this part of Colton.

*Passive Recreation Park Facility*

A new passive recreational park is proposed on land owned by the City of Colton in the vicinity of the recharge basins west of the East Fogg Street extension. This facility will include hiking trails, a fishing pond, open space areas, and amenities such as small picnic shelters and fishing walks, etc. In addition, a pedestrian bridge is proposed to connect this park area with the Santa Ana River trail on the east side of the Santa Ana River. It is anticipated that this bridge would cross the river above the inflatable dam location, or another suitable location depending on feasibility.

At a later date, Colton may construct a park that contains active facilities, such as ball fields, athletic courts, and amenities that would be commensurate with a regional park facility. The development of a facility of this type would be analyzed under a separate environmental document.

*East Fogg Street Extension and Conceptual Railroad ROW*

The final component of the proposed Project is the extension of Fogg Street and potential railroad right-of-way (ROW) realignment along the western side of the proposed basins. The Fogg Street extension would connect the existing terminus of Fogg Street with East Congress Street, just north of the proposed basins where East Congress Street curves to the north. In addition, the Project is also allocating additional land for a potential re-alignment of an existing railroad ROW just west of the Project site. Environmental impacts associated with the re-alignment of this existing railroad ROW will be analyzed in a separate environmental document at a later date. A depiction of the proposed Fogg Street re-alignment and conceptual railroad ROW is provided in Exhibit 3, Proposed Project Limits.

**IV. AGREEMENTS, PERMITS, AND APPROVALS**

Riverside is the Lead Agency for the proposed Project and has discretionary authority over the Project. To implement this Project, the following agreements, permits, and approvals are anticipated:

<b>Anticipated Agreements, Permits, and Approvals</b>	<b>Granting Agency</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Certification</li> </ul>	City of Riverside
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encroachment Permit</li> </ul>	San Bernardino County Flood Control District
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval to Modify Levees and Grade Stabilizer</li> <li>• Discharge of Dredge or Fill Material into Water (Section 404 Permit)</li> <li>• Air Quality Conformity Determination</li> </ul>	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Rights Permit</li> <li>• Temporary Urgency Permit</li> </ul>	State Water Resources Control Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement</li> </ul>	California Department of Fish and Game
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endangered Species Act (ESA) Compliance</li> </ul>	United States Fish and Wildlife



Anticipated Agreements, Permits, and Approvals	Granting Agency
	Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NPDES Permit</li> <li>• Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification</li> </ul>	Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Construction/ Encroachment Permits (beyond City of Riverside property)</li> <li>• Passive Park Construction (future)</li> <li>• Pedestrian Bridge across Santa Ana River (future)</li> </ul>	City of Colton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential Future Railroad Re-Alignment (future)</li> </ul>	California Public Utilities Commission and Union Pacific Railroad

In addition, since the subject properties are located within the City of Colton, in accordance with Section 15096 of the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Colton is considered a Responsible Agency.

**V. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT**

Based upon review of available information, Riverside has determined that the Project may have significant environmental effects and, therefore, has initiated the preparation of a Project EIR. This EIR will address potentially significant Project-related impacts, based upon written responses to the NOP, public and agency comments on the NOP, public scoping meeting comments, consultation with potentially affected agencies, results of various technical studies, and research conducted throughout the EIR process. The following discussions of potential environmental effects represent a preliminary summary of potential impacts that may be modified during the course of the EIR preparation.

**Air Quality:** The existing conditions portion of this section will provide a discussion on the current status of the California Clean Air Act and relevant air quality planning programs. Existing pollutant data will be obtained from the nearest monitoring station(s). This data will be summarized in a table indicating days exceeding State and Federal Standards for monitored pollutants. The various types of pollutants monitored at the station will also be described and sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the Project site (i.e., residences, schools, playgrounds, childcare centers, hospitals, convalescent homes, and retirement homes) will be identified. The analysis will specifically address air pollutants for which the Basin is in non-attainment; these include ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

The analysis within the EIR will provide discussion of potential Project impacts upon climate and air quality, addressing temporary construction emissions and long-term emissions from Project operations associated with maintenance activities and energy consumption. Short-term air quality impacts will be discussed focusing on dust generation, construction vehicle emissions, and possible odors. Short-term impact analysis will focus on CO, VOCs, NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and PM<sub>10</sub> emissions. In addition, Project consistency will be evaluated based upon local and regional planning programs. Based on the Air Quality Management District (AQMD) and City criteria, the EIR will model construction-related dust and vehicle emissions and long-term operational emissions using URBEMIS and EMFAC. A Carbon Monoxide (CO) hotspot analysis will be provided, if warranted. The EIR will also provide estimated projections of annual greenhouse gas emissions resulting from development of the Project site, and will provide a qualitative discussion of the proposed Project's impacts relative to global warming and climate change. The EIR will recommend mitigation measures as appropriate to reduce construction and operational impacts to the extent feasible.



**Biological Resources:** The EIR will address potential impacts to biological resources, including special status species, such as the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Santa Ana River Woolly Star, and the Santa Ana Sucker (all of which may be present onsite). The potential for sensitive habitats will also be evaluated. A jurisdictional delineation was performed within the Project site, which identifies the portions of the site under Federal and State regulatory agency authority. The proposed Project may impact between one and two acres of land under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and/or California Department of Fish and Game. Further discussion and analysis of the jurisdictional impacts associated with the Project will be provided in the EIR. The EIR will include information from the City of Colton *General Plan* as well as technical documentation prepared for this Project. The EIR will recommend mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts on these resources.

**Cultural Resources:** The EIR will address potential impacts with respect to historical, archaeological and paleontological resources. There is a potential that these resources may be located within the Project site. The EIR will also evaluate the potential for disturbance of human remains. The EIR will recommend mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts on these resources.

**Geology, Soils and Seismicity:** The EIR will address potential impacts associated with geologic hazards and resources. The Project site is located along the Rialto-Colton fault, which separates the Riverside North and Chino groundwater basins from the Colton groundwater basins. The EIR will examine impacts related to seismically-induced ground failure, such as the rupture of faults, ground shaking, and liquefaction. The Project site is located within an area susceptible to liquefaction. The increase in groundwater levels in the area due to replenishment from the groundwater basins, and its associated effects on liquefaction potential, will be discussed. Soil erosion will be evaluated, in addition to existing ACOE, City and California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) design and operational requirements. As part of this review and analysis, mitigation measures will be provided, where applicable to reduce potentially significant impacts on these resources.

**Hydrology and Water Quality:** The EIR will address potential onsite and offsite impacts with respect to water quality and drainage. This section will include discussion of appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) with respect to construction and operational water quality issues and an analysis of the Project's impacts on groundwater resources and its contribution to aquifer recharge. Since rising water levels upstream of the proposed inflatable dam may occur, the EIR will evaluate impacts related to increased erosion and siltation. The potential for increased onsite and offsite flooding, including the redirection and impediment of flows, will also be addressed in the EIR. If required, mitigation measures such as water efficient landscape will be recommended to minimize potentially significant impacts.

**Land Use and Relevant Planning:** The EIR will include evaluation of the proposed Project with respect to the City of Colton *General Plan* and Zoning and Development Code and related plans/policies, such as any related habitat conservation plans. The EIR will address the Project's potential to physically divide a community. The proposed pedestrian over-crossing for river trail access will be included in this analysis. Discussion of land use compatibility issues will identify and address neighboring residential, manufacturing and storage warehouses. If required, mitigation measures will be recommended to minimize potentially significant impacts.

**Noise:** The EIR will include evaluation of potential noise impacts of the proposed Project, focusing on short-term construction noise (including truck hauling from site grading and construction), long-term changes in noise levels in the Project area due to maintenance



operations and associated truck trips along area roadways, and changes in ambient noise levels associated with dam operations. This section will specifically address impacts associated with the Project on noise-sensitive land uses both within the Project site and along existing offsite roadways. The sensitive receptor analysis will include the two nearby schools, San Bernardino County Special Education (located approximately 300 feet from the Project site) and East Valley Community Day School (approximately 800 feet from the site) and the proposed onsite passive park. The noise analysis will also address potential increases in noise levels within the Project site and along the adjacent roadway portions as they relate to anticipated cumulative noise impacts. If required, mitigation measures will be recommended to minimize potentially significant impacts.

**Transportation and Circulation:** The EIR will summarize the results of a Traffic Impact Analysis, which will address potential impacts to local roadways, intersections and state highways, as well as Congestion Management Plan requirements. Mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary to mitigate impacts associated with existing and cumulative conditions.

**Additional Environmental Topics:** The EIR will also address CEQA-mandated sections such as Cumulative Impacts, Growth-Inducing Impacts, Alternatives and other required sections.

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

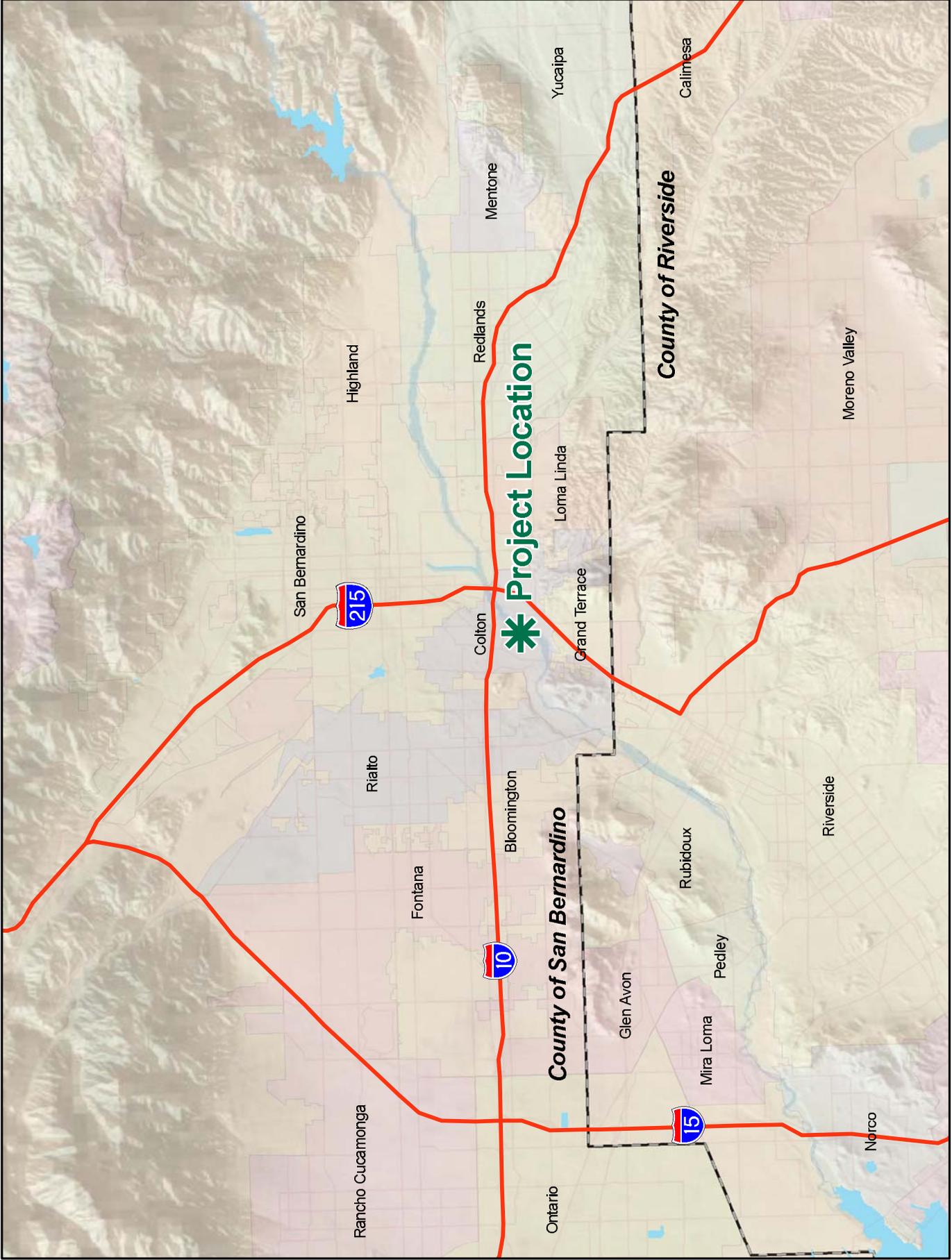
Following completion of the 30-day Notice of Preparation public review period, the City of Riverside will incorporate relevant information into the Project EIR, including results of public scoping and technical studies. A Draft EIR will be circulated for public review and comment for the required 45-day public review period. All individuals that have requested notification will be placed on a Notice of Availability list for the Draft EIR, which will be available for review at the following locations:

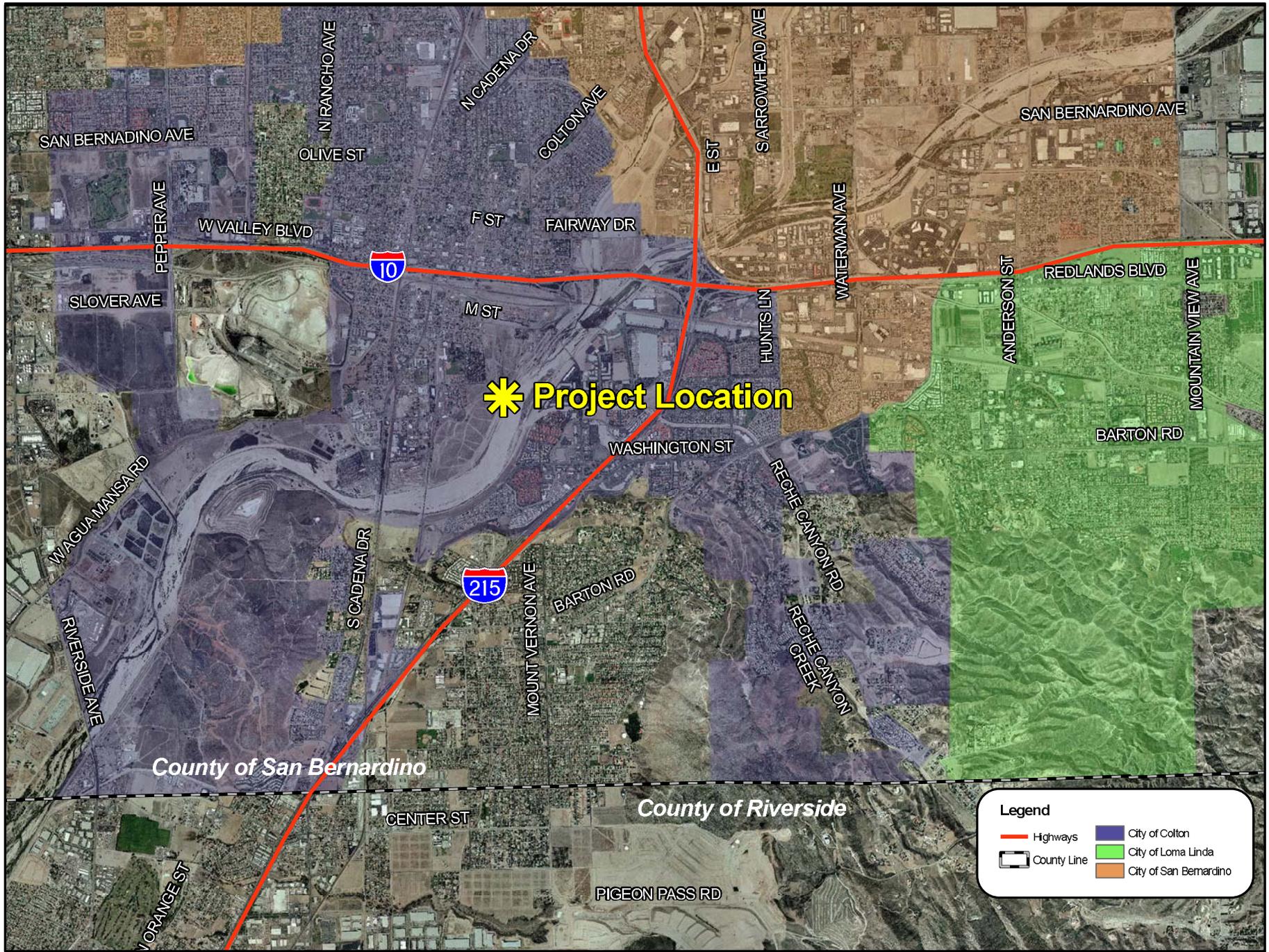
City of Riverside  
Public Utilities Department  
3901 Orange Street  
Riverside, CA 92501

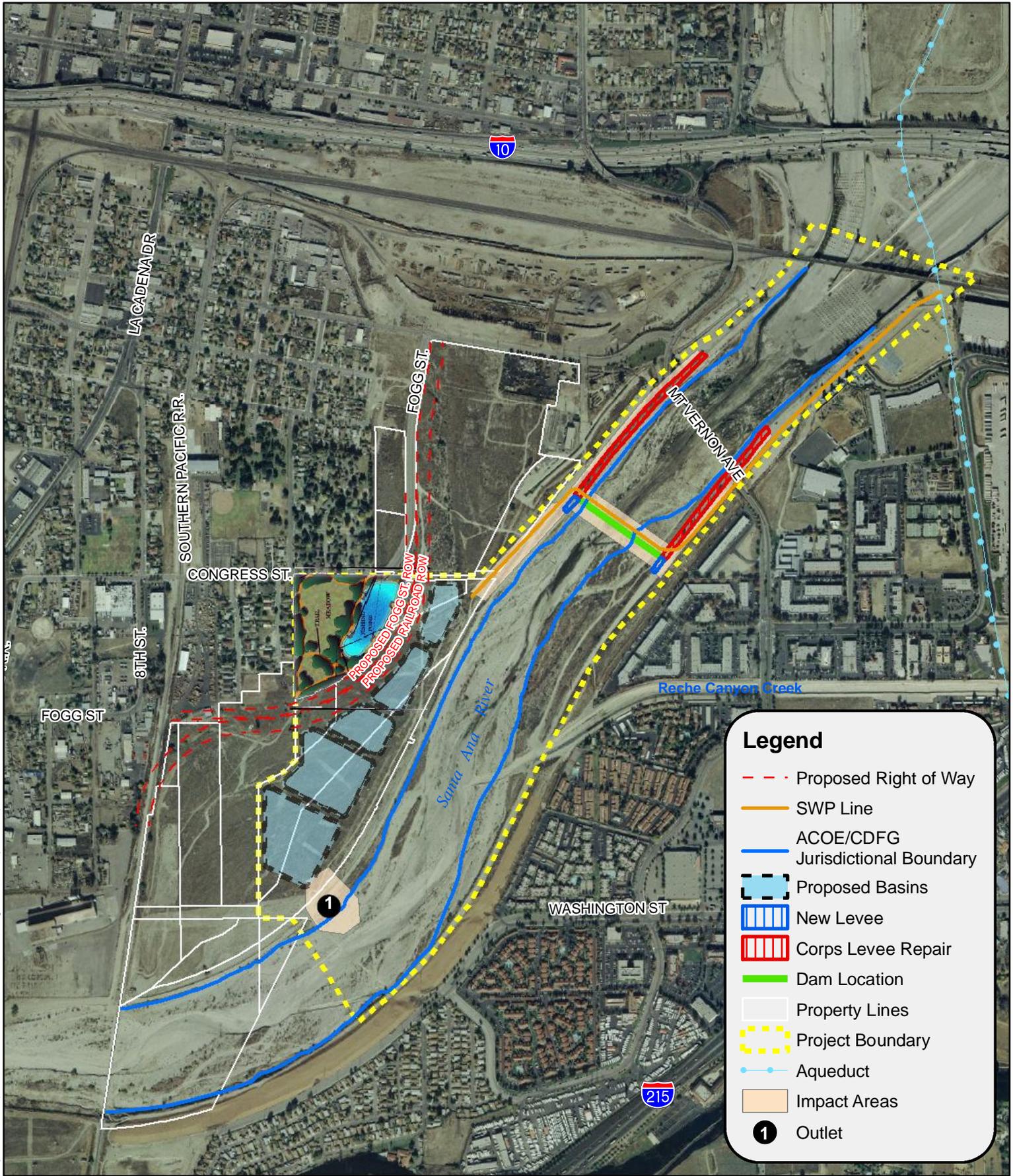
City of Colton  
650 N. La Cadena Drive  
Colton, CA 92324

Following receipt of all written comments on the Draft EIR, the City of Riverside will prepare Responses to Comments as part of the Final EIR, prior to EIR Certification.

Should you have any questions or comments regarding this Notice of Preparation, please contact Max Rasouli, Water Resources Manager at (951) 826-5574.







October 22, 2009



# RIVERSIDE NORTH AQUIFER AND STORAGE RECOVERY PROJECT EIR

## Proposed Project Limits