

**SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**



FROM: Supervisor Jeff Stone

SUBMITTAL DATE: November 20, 2012

SUBJECT: Facilitate Accredited Impartial Required Studies Competently Ordered (by) Riverside County Entities (FAIRSCORE) a proposed policy requiring all processing of Environment Impact Reports to be fully administered and contracted by Riverside County.

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

1. That the Board of Supervisors direct staff to develop the proposed **FAIRSCORE** policy which mandates that the county, *as opposed to* the project proponent, select a qualified, competent consultant on the county's approved certified vendors list, to perform county, state or federal required studies associated with the development review process. All consulting work shall be paid for by the applicant and monitored and administered by the county.
2. That Board of Supervisors direct the Transportation Land Management Agency to develop a program that implements execute FAIRSCORE policy as it pertains to:
 - a. the qualification process/ selection of consultants,
 - b. administration of contracts/ memorandum of understanding with consultants
 - c. an environment review process that is transparent and open
3. That the Board of Supervisors create a FAIRSCORE ad hoc committee by each Supervisor submitting one appointee name to the Transportation Land Management Agency director to evaluate the current process and make recommendations on the proposed program so that issues can be vetted prior to Board consideration and action on the proposed policy and process. Appointee shall be knowledgeable in the environment review process
4. That the Board of Supervisors direct the Transportation Land Management Agency to submit a report on the status and progress of this task within 45 days and that Staff submit the proposed policy/program for Board consideration and action within 120 days from this directive.


JEFF STONE, Supervisor

BACKGROUND:

Environmental review is a critical and a state mandated process for the review, processing and adoption of planning projects or any project under CEQA. Currently the county fulfills the oversight of the environmental review process and through a Memorandum of Understanding. This process affords the county the ability to provide input into the selection of the consultant, the data and analysis conducted for the project. However, our current process is loosely structured and in the eyes of the public there is no verification that county staff is in control of the process. This leaves the public to speculate whether the studies are genuine and authentic or somehow tainted with input from the project proponent. Public trust can be restored by refining the process so that critical decisions are made by the county not the project proponent.

Implementation of FAIRSCORE would require delineating what projects require a contract or memorandum of understanding and how the county would contract for the work, monitor the process and manage the project. This is not uncommon and many jurisdictions currently practice this approach. It is understood that all cost are to be borne by the applicant. The new process should represent a streamlining of development in the county not the creation of a cumbersome layer in the development review process.

Prior to Board deliberation it is suggested that an ad hoc committee be formed to review of the current process and structure an improved and refined process that fully reflects the intent of the FAIRSCORE policy. The creation of the ad hoc committee will assure that issues are fully vetted by professionals in the industry. It is suggested that each board member appoint an individual that is familiar with and has experienced the processing of EIRs in Riverside County. This policy improves the process, sets expectations and requirements up-front in an uncomplicated manner imparting a higher level of confidence to the public in the accurateness of environmental data and analysis.