

4.0 Comments and Coordination

4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH

4.1.1 Public Participation Program

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) initiated the formal scoping process by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the Federal Register on July 14, 2006. The FRA is the lead agency for the project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and will be preparing the EIS. The Surface Transportation Board (STB), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are Cooperating Agencies under NEPA, and will be participating with the FRA in preparing the EIS.

Three public scoping meetings were held as part of the public scoping process:

Las Vegas Area	Barstow Area	Victorville Area
The White House	Ramada Inn	San Bernardino County Fair Grounds
3260 Joe Brown Drive	1571 E Main Street	14800 Seventh Street, Building 3
July 25, 2006	July 26, 2006	July 26, 2006
5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

These meetings provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on the scope of environmental topics that will be analyzed in the EIS.

Approximately 60 members of the public attended the scoping meetings, which are summarized in Appendix P. Meeting attendees were asked to register at the meeting so that a project mailing list could be created; this mailing list will be used by the FRA to update the public and agencies on subsequent public involvement opportunities (including meetings) and to disseminate additional information on the proposed project. Once registered, attendees received the following meeting materials (copies of these documents are provided within Appendix P):

- **Meeting Handout** describing the purpose of the Scoping Meeting and providing the meeting agenda.
- **Surface Transportation Board Brochure** outlining STB's environmental review process for new line construction projects.
- **Project Location Map** showing the proposed project alternatives.
- **Project Informational Mailer** discussing the project components, project purpose and need, and public scoping process.
- **Comment Sheet** for attendees to submit comments.

FRA and contractor staff presented the purpose and need for the proposed project, described the environmental studies to be conducted, and requested participation in determining the scope of environmental review. Representatives of DesertXpress Enterprises, LLS also provided information on the proposed project. Once the presentation concluded, attendees were encouraged to view the various exhibits that were placed around the room, and to direct questions to representatives of FRA or DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC. Freestanding exhibit boards were placed throughout the meeting area for participants to review. (Copies of the exhibit boards are included in Appendix P.) Large aerial maps depicting the proposed project alignment were also presented at each scoping meeting.

4.1.2 Formal Scoping Meeting Notification

4.1.2.1 Federal Register/Notice of Intent

A NOI was printed in the Federal Register on July 14, 2006 (see Appendix P).

4.1.2.2 Newspaper

Notices to the public were published in local newspapers. Notices describing the proposed project and listing the dates and locations of the scoping meetings were printed in the Daily Press and the Las Vegas Sun/Las Vegas Review Journal (July 14 and July 23) and in the Desert Dispatch (July 14 and July 22). Appendix P contains the proof of publication in these newspapers.

4.1.2.3 Mailing

The FRA sent notification mailers to approximately 2,500 individuals on the project mailing list (including property owners within 500 feet of the proposed rail alignments). The notice provided information on the Scoping Meetings and briefly described the proposed elements of the project. The notice also included details on how and where to submit formal comments on the project. Appendix P contains a copy of the Project Information Notice.

Hotline

A telephone hotline was also established to provide a contact for upcoming Public Scoping Meetings.

4.1.3 Comment Summary

Public Scoping Meeting attendees were asked to submit their completed comment sheets at the meeting attended, or to mail the sheets (by August 15, 2006) to 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 305, Sacramento, California. Approximately 24 comment letters were received from meeting attendees. In addition to the comment sheets, 12 letters were received by the FRA at 1120 Vermont Avenue, Washington, DC 20590. No comments were received via the project hotline; however, one meeting participant called the hotline to request additional project information. Appendix P contains the Scoping Meeting Summary Report including all comments received on the project.

4.1.4 Circulation/Notification of Draft EIS

Copies of all notification materials have been compiled in **Appendix P**.

FRA initiated the public review and comment period of the Draft EIS by publishing a Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Draft EIS in the Federal Register on March 27, 2009.

FRA mailed notice of the Draft EIS availability to approximately 2,500 individuals on the project mailing list (including property owners within 500 feet of the proposed rail alignments). The notice included information on how to obtain a copy of the Draft EIS, the deadline for comments to be submitted, a brief description of the Action Alternatives and proposed elements of the project, and the date, location and time of three public hearings to be held in the project area as follows:

Las Vegas Area: Tuesday, April 28, 2009, 5:30 – 8:00 p. m.

Hampton Inn Tropicana
4975 Dean Martin Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Barstow Area: Wednesday, April 29, 2009, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Ramada Inn
1511 East Main Street
Barstow, CA 92311

Victorville Area: Thursday, April 30, 2009 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Green Tree Golf Course
14144 Green Tree Boulevard
Victorville, CA 92395

Notice was also published in the Victorville *Daily Press*, the Barstow *Desert Dispatch*, the Las Vegas *Sun*, and the Las Vegas *Review-Journal*. These notices describe the project, indicate where and how to obtain copies of the Draft EIS, inform of the deadline for comments to be submitted, provide the dates and locations of the public hearings.

4.1.4.1 Document Availability

FRA placed copies of the Draft EIS and appendices at following libraries:

- Victorville City Library
15011 Circle Drive, Victorville, CA 92395
- Barstow Library
304 East Buena Vista, Barstow, CA 92311
- Las Vegas Library
833 Las Vegas Boulevard North, Las Vegas, NV 89101

FRA also made electronic versions of the Draft EIS and appendices accessible through FRA's website: www.fra.dot.gov

4.2 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

4.2.1 Interagency Meetings Prior to Publication of the Draft EIS

FRA and its third-party contractor held interagency meetings during preparation of the Draft EIS to seek input and obtain information from other governmental agencies with unique expertise or knowledge of the project area. These meetings included:

- December 5, 2008, Interagency conference call with FRA, BLM, STB, FHWA, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer.
- September 25, 2007, Interagency meeting in Barstow with BLM (Barstow and Las Vegas offices), USFWS (Las Vegas and Ventura offices), and CDFG.
- December 19, 2006: Interagency meeting in Barstow with BLM (Barstow and Las Vegas offices), USFWS (Las Vegas and Ventura offices), NPS, and CDFG.
- October 12, 2006, Meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency, San Francisco, CA.
- August 28, 2006, Interagency conference call on traffic. Participating agencies included: FRA, FHWA, Caltrans, NDOT, RTC, SCAG, and SANDBAG.
- July 31, 2006, Resource Agency meeting, Barstow CA. Participating agencies included: USFWS, BLM, and CDFG.

4.2.2 Cooperating Agency and EIS Working Group Consultation During Preparation of the Draft EIS

FRA held regular meetings with the Cooperating Agencies and EIS Working Group throughout preparation of the Draft EIS. Meetings and conference calls are listed below.

- December 10, 2008: EIS Working Group meeting. Participating agencies included FRA, STB, BLM, FHWA, NDOT, Caltrans, and NPS.
- August 7, 2008: EIS Working Group conference call. Participating agencies included FRA, STB, BLM, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.
- June 26, 2008: EIS Working Group conference call. Participating agencies included FRA, STB, BLM, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.
- April 8, 2008, EIS Working Group meeting, Sacramento, CA. Participating agencies included: FRA, BLM, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.
- June 6, 2007, EIS Working Group conference call. Participating agencies included: FRA, STB, BLM, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.
- May 9, 2007, EIS Working group conference call. Participating agencies included: FRA, STB, BLM, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.
- January 10, 2007, Cooperating Agency conference call. Participating agencies included: FRA, STB, BLM, and FHWA.

- April 20, 2006, Cooperating Agency meeting in Sacramento, CA. Participating agencies included: FRA, STB, BLM, and NDOT.
- November 8, 2006, Cooperating Agency conference call. Participating agencies included: FRA, STB, BLM, and FHWA.
- June 21, 2006, Cooperating Agency conference call. Participating agencies included: FRA, STB, FHWA, BLM, NDOT, and Caltrans.
- October 11, 2006, Cooperating Agency conference call. Participating agencies included: FRA, BLM, and FHWA.

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