

4.0 Comments and Coordination

4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND OUTREACH

The **Section 4.1** of the Draft EIS included a summary of scoping meetings and distribution of the Draft EIS. This section summarizes additional public and agency involvement and outreach since publication of the Draft EIS.

4.1.1 SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT EIS NOTICING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

FRA initiated the public review and comment period of the Supplemental Draft EIS by publishing a Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Supplemental Draft EIS in the Federal Register on September 3, 2010.

FRA mailed notice of the Supplemental Draft EIS availability to approximately 2,500 individuals on the project mailing list (including property owners within 500 feet of the proposed rail alignments). This list was updated in June 2010 to help ensure greater accuracy. The notice included information on how to obtain a copy of the Supplemental Draft EIS, the deadline for comments to be submitted, a brief description of the project modifications and additions since publication of the Draft EIS, and the date, location and time of two public hearings to be held in the project area as follows:

Las Vegas: Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 5:30 – 8:00 p. m.

Hampton Inn Tropicana
SW Event Center B
4975 Dean Martin Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89118

Victorville/Barstow Area: Thursday, October 14, 2010, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Lenwood Hampton Inn
Jackrabbit Room 1
2710 Lenwood Road
Barstow, CA 92311

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 described the project, indicated where and how to obtain copies of the Supplemental Draft EIS, informed the public of the deadline to submit comments, and provided the dates and locations of the public hearings.

Document Availability

FRA placed copies of the Supplemental 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
- Clark County Library: 1401 E. Flamingo, Las Vegas, NV, 89119

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

4.1.2 DRAFT EIS NOTICING AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

Draft EIS Formal Scoping Meeting Notification

The scoping process for the Draft EIS began with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register. The NOI was printed in the Federal Register on July 14, 2006.

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

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

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

Notices regarding the public scoping meetings were published in local newspapers. Notices describing the proposed project and listing the dates and locations of the scoping meetings were printed in the Victorville *Daily Press* and the Las Vegas *Sun/Las Vegas Review Journal* (July 14 and July 23, 2006) and in the Barstow *Desert Dispatch* (July 14 and July 23, 2006). 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. A telephone hotline was also established to provide a contact for the scoping meetings.

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.

The Draft EIS included **Appendix P**, summarizing all comments received during the scoping process. The Final EIS for the DesertXpress project will compile and respond to all comments received on the Draft EIS and this Supplemental Draft EIS.

Circulation and Notification of the Draft EIS

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). Notice was also published in the Victorville *Daily Press*, the Barstow *Desert Dispatch*, the Las Vegas *Sun*, and the Las Vegas *Review-Journal*. 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. Three public hearings were held on the Draft EIS, as follows:

- **Las Vegas:** April 28, 2009, 5:30pm – 8:00pm. Hampton Inn Tropicana, 4975 Dean Martin Drive
- **Barstow:** April 29, 2009, 5:30pm – 8:00pm. Ramada Inn, 1511 East Main Street
- **Victorville:** April 30, 2009, 5:30pm – 8:00pm. Green Tree Golf Course, 14144 Green Tree Boulevard

FRA placed copies of the Draft EIS and appendices at the 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
- Clark County Library: 1401 East Flamingo, Las Vegas, NV, 89119

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

4.2 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Since the publication of the Draft EIS, FRA has continued its consultation efforts with the Cooperating Federal Agencies (Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Surface Transportation Board (STB), Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), National Park Service (NPS)) as well as state agencies, resource agencies, and other governmental agencies.

4.2.1 INTERAGENCY MEETINGS PRIOR TO PUBLICATION OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL DRAFT EIS

Section 4.2.1 of the Draft EIS summarized interagency meetings FRA and its third-party contractor held 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. This list shows meetings convened following publication of the Draft EIS in March 2009.

- March 3, 2009, Interagency conference call to discuss the Section 106 process. Agencies: FRA, BLM, FHWA, Caltrans, NDOT, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the California State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer.
- April 28, 2009, Informational meeting with Native American Tribes regarding the Draft EIS.

Agencies: FRA, STB, BLM

Tribes: Chemehuevi Tribe

- April 30, 2009, Informational meeting with Native American Tribes regarding Draft EIS and Section 106 Process.

Agencies: FRA, STB, BLM

Tribes: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians.

- October 23, 2009, Teleconference regarding Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Agencies: FRA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- November 13, 2009, Meeting regarding Section 404. Agencies: FRA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- November 19, 2009, Teleconference with Native American Tribes regarding Section 106 Process.

Agencies: FRA, STB, BLM, FHWA, Caltrans, the California State Historic Preservation Officer

Tribes: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians.

- January 6, 2010: Informational Meeting and Field Trip with Native American Tribes regarding prehistoric sites.

Agencies: FRA, BLM

Tribes: Timbisha Shoshone, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, Chemehuevi Indian Tribe

- **January 7, 2010: Government-to-Government Consultation Meeting at BLM Barstow Field Office**
Agencies: FRA, BLM
Tribe: Timbisha Shoshone
- **January 8, 2010, Government-to-Government Consultation Meeting, Highland, California**
Agencies: FRA, BLM
Tribe: Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians
- **January 8, 2010, Government-to-Government Consultation Meeting, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Reservation**
Agencies: FRA, BLM, Caltrans
Tribe: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- **February 8, 2010, Interagency teleconference to discuss the Section 7 consultation with FRA and USFWS.**
- **February 24, 2010, Interagency teleconference to discuss Section 404 compliance. Agencies: FRA and USACE (Los Angeles District)**
- **March 3 2010, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA, FAA, Clark County Department of Aviation.**
- **April 6, 2010, Informational Meeting with Native American Tribes to discuss archaeological site data, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians Reservation**
Agencies: FRA (represented by project archeologist consultants), BLM
Tribes: San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians
- **April 19 2010, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA and EPA.**

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. This list of meetings has been updated to include additional meetings convened following publication of the Draft EIS:

- **November 12, 2009, Interagency meeting, Washington, D.C. Agencies: FRA and STB.**
- **November 17,2009, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA, STB, and BLM.**
- **November 18,2009, EIS Working Group teleconference. Agencies: FRA, STB, BLM, NPS, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.**
- **November 25, 2009, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA and NPS.**
- **December 8, 2009, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA and FHWA.**
- **December 9, 2009, EIS Working Group teleconference. Agencies: FRA, STB, BLM, NPS, FHWA, NDOT, and Caltrans.**

- December 10, 2009, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA and STB.
- January 20, 2010, Interagency meeting, Washington, D.C. Agencies: FRA and NDOT.
- February 18, 2010, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA, BLM, FHWA, and NDOT.
- March 5, 2010, Interagency meeting, Washington, D.C. Agencies: FRA and FHWA.
- April 15, 2010, Interagency meeting, Washington, D.C. Agencies: FRA and FHWA.
- July 1, 2010, Interagency teleconference. Agencies: FRA and FHWA.
- July 21, 2010, Interagency meeting, Washington, D.C. Agencies: FRA and NDOT.
- August 25, 2010, Interagency meeting, Washington, D.C. Agencies: FRA and FHWA.