

## CHAPTER 4 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process to determine the scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis, potential impacts and mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. The environmental document was prepared on the basis of consultation and coordination with various federal, State, and local agencies, organizations, and public participation. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including: project development team meetings; interagency coordination meetings; scoping meetings; public open houses; a series of community information meetings and workshops; newsletters; a project web site, formal letter requests for information and public notices during the study. This chapter summarizes the results of the Department's efforts to fully identify, address and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

### 4.1 Scoping Meetings

The process of determining the scope and focus of the project is known as "scoping". The scoping process allows agencies and other interested parties to provide input on the proposed alternatives, topics being evaluated, and potential impacts and mitigation measures being considered. Scoping is the earliest opportunity to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review of the proposed project. It seeks public input to identify project issues, facilitate an efficient environmental documentation process, defines issues and alternatives to be examined in the environmental document, and ensure that relevant issues are addressed. It is the beginning of the environmental process, not the selection of a preferred alternative. As part of the scoping process, the Department conducted agency and public scoping meetings to solicit input. Written comments were also accepted throughout the scoping period.

The scoping process began with formal agency notification. On November 6, 2002, the Notice of Preparation (NOP) was distributed to advise interested agencies and the public that an Environmental Impact Report would be prepared for the proposed project. On November 21, 2002, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register to advise interested agencies and the public that an Environmental Impact Statement would be prepared for the Caldecott Improvement Project.

All CEQA and NEPA requirements were met to inform the public of the scoping process. Letters were mailed to more than 1700 property owners, elected officials, city staff, special interest organizations, libraries, and neighborhood groups. Information pertaining to the scoping meetings also appeared on the project website at [www.caldecott-tunnel.com](http://www.caldecott-tunnel.com). Two articles appeared on December 14, 2002 in the *Oakland Tribune* entitled, "Caldecott tunnel Comments Wanted" and on January 4, 2003 in the *Rockridge News* entitled "Caldecott Planning: Hurry for Input at Final Caltrans Scoping Meeting". Display advertisements announcing the public scoping meetings were also submitted to *Contra Costa Times* and the ANG Group for Sunday, December 1 and Sunday, December 8, 2002.

Agency scoping meetings were held at the Department's District 4 office on December 3, 2002 and February 5, 2003. Public scoping meetings were held in three different locations throughout the project area. The first meeting was held on December 11, 2002 in the city of Orinda, Contra Costa County. Two additional meetings were held in the city of Oakland, Alameda County. The first was held on December 12, 2002 and the second on January 9, 2003. The meetings provided a forum for attendees to learn about the project, then environmental process, scoping, and initial project alternatives.

The first agency scoping meeting and the public scoping meetings were organized in an open-house format. Attendees were invited to examine informational boards posted around the room and talk to the Caldecott Improvement Team regarding specific issues or to offer comments. At the second agency scoping meeting the format consisted of a round table discussion and brief presentations were given. The Department provided agencies with background project information, a description of the environmental review process, and an update of the scoping process to date. The comment period ended on February 14, 2003, however the department has continued to receive and consider comments from the public and interested parties. A combined total of 85 individuals attended the public scoping meetings and 338 comments were subsequently received. These comments and those received verbally at the meetings were compiled and reviewed to ensure that the technical studies for the project adequately addressed all salient issues. A final scoping summary report summary report was issued in February 2003.

## **4.2 Project Organization and Committees**

The Caldecott Improvement Project is using a combination of committees established for the project and ongoing liaison with pre-existing groups to ensure effective coordination with all interested parties.

### **4.2.1 Lead and Cooperating Agencies**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the California Department of Transportation (the Department) are serving as joint lead agencies to prepare this Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR). Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) are cooperating agencies in the preparation of this document.

### **4.2.2 Executive Steering Committee**

In the summer of 2004 a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] was signed by the Department, the CCTA, and the ACCMA to accelerate the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) and the construction process for this project. The MOU established roles and responsibilities for the three agencies including the creation of an Executive Steering Committee. The members of the committee are the Department's District 4 Director, the Executive Director of the CCTA, and the Executive Director of ACCMA. The committee provides project guidance and issues project-specific policies or policy determinations related to each phase of the project.

### **4.2.3 Project Development Team (PDT)**

The Project Development Team (PDT) is comprised of the Project Manager, and representatives from the various functional units that are involved in the project development process. This includes but is not limited to representatives from the project design group, environmental, traffic, construction, surveys, right-of-way, FHWA and representatives from various local, and regional agencies.

The PDT advises and assists the Project Manager in directing the course of studies, makes recommendations to the Project Manager and district management and works to carry out the project work plan. Members of the PDT participate in major meetings, public hearings, and community involvement. The PDT is responsible for the conduct of studies and accumulation of data throughout the project development to the Plans, Specifications, and Estimates phase.

#### **4.2.4 Project Leadership Team (PLT)**

The Project Leadership Team consists of the Department's District 4 Division Chief of Project Management East, the CCTA Deputy Director for Projects, the ACCMA Deputy Director for Projects, the Project Manager, and the Deputy Project Manager.

The PLT supports the Project Manager in delivering the project within scope, schedule, and budget. This group provides the Executive Steering Committee with recommendations for those items requiring the committee approval per the Cooperative Agreement. The PLT is responsible for delivering the project.

#### **4.2.5 Project Management Groups**

The Project Management Groups consist of (1) Environmental and Public Relations, (2) Project Controls, and (3) Roadway Design/Geotechnical/Structures/Tunnels. Each group meets separately to address specific deliverable and coordinates work of the attending disciplines.

#### **4.2.6 Project Management Team (PMT)**

The role of the Project Management Team is to deliver the project by overseeing day-to-day project activities impacting scope, schedule, and cost. It consists of the Project Manager, the Deputy Project Manager, and the Discipline Leads with active tasks.

#### **4.2.7 Technical Review Committee (TRC)**

A Technical Review Committee (TRC) was assembled consisting of recognized experts in the tunnel design and construction fields. Members participate in regular meetings and provide technical input. They provide advice and consultation through the design process to the design team regarding tunnel design.

### **4.3 Agency Consultations**

#### **4.3.1 Agencies Contacted**

Agencies formally or informally contacted and consulted during the preparation of this environmental document include but are not limited to the following:

- Alameda County Congestion Management Agency;
- Cities of Berkeley, Lafayette, Moraga, Oakland, and Orinda;
- Contra Costa County Transportation Authority;
- State Historic Preservation Office;
- United States Fish and Wildlife Services; and
- United States Army Corps of Engineers.

## **4.4 Public Participation**

### **4.4.1 Public Meetings**

#### **4.4.1.1 OVERVIEW OF INFORMATIONAL OPEN HOUSES**

In June 2005, the Caldecott Improvement Project hosted two informational public open houses to update the community about the project. The open houses offered information on the project purpose and need, the project schedule, alternatives under consideration, project design and construction, visual impacts, traffic operations, and the history of the tunnels. The open houses were held on Tuesday, June 7, 2005 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center and Thursday, June 9, 2005 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Bentley School in Oakland. Over seventy participants, including interested citizens, residents, special interest groups and local government representatives attended the Orinda open house, and over eighty participants attended the Oakland open house.

Each open house provided project information organized into the following categories: Welcome & Sign In, Project Overview, Environmental Process & Ongoing Environmental Studies Overview, History of the Caldecott Tunnel, Design & Construction, and Next Steps & Additional Information. Personnel from Caltrans, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and the project team were available to answer questions from meeting participants. Comment cards and flip charts were provided to allow participants to submit written comments. Seventeen comment cards were received at the Orinda open house and twenty-seven were received in Oakland. These comments were compiled and reviewed to ensure that project studies adequately addressed all salient issues. The open houses were generally well received and many participants remarked that the meetings left them more informed about the project.

#### **4.4.1.2 MEETING NOTIFICATION**

Notification for the open houses consisted of a meeting notice directly mailed to over 9,000 people. The mailing list included over 8,000 residents located near the project area, as well as elected officials, government agencies, special interest groups and other interested parties. Meeting notices were available at the offices of Caltrans, Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and Alameda County Congestion Management Agency. An e-mail invitation was sent to over 150 interested parties, including city staff from the project area that had been briefed about the project in May and June 2005. A newspaper advertisement ran in the Oakland Tribune and Contra Costa Times on June 2, 2005 and Caltrans distributed a press release. Public meetings were held in the cities of Orinda and Oakland. These public meetings were held to inform the public of the status of the project.

### **4.4.2 Public Hearing and Circulation of the Draft EA/EIR**

The Draft Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (DEA/EIR) for the Caldecott Improvement Project on State Route 24 was circulated during May, June and July of 2006. In response to a request from interested parties, a 60-day public review period was provided, during which two public hearings were held: on June 7 in Contra Costa County and on June 15 in Alameda County.<sup>1</sup> Two public hearings in separate locations were held to maximize participation by interested parties on both sides of the Caldecott Tunnel. The public hearings were conducted to present the results of the environmental studies and receive public input on the Draft EA/EIR. Public comments

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<sup>1</sup> Due to e-mail technical difficulties from June 29 to July 5, 2006, the comment period was extended to July 31, 2006.

were recorded at the meetings; also, comment cards were distributed and collected and contact information and the deadline for submitting formal written comments were announced.

On May 26, 2006, a double-sided, self-mailing public hearing notice presenting project information including project sponsors, project goals, a Draft EA/EIR overview and the dates, times, locations, and purpose of the public hearings as well as contact information for submitting comments was mailed to some 9,000 interested parties listed in the project database. These interested parties included property owners, agency representatives, elected officials and others who had expressed interest in the project. In addition, on May 31, 2006, a display advertisement, Public Notice of Availability, of the environmental document was published in both the *Oakland Tribune* and *Contra Costa Times*. This notice included the meeting dates, times, locations, purpose of the meetings and contact information for submitting comments.

Project information and links to electronic copies of the public hearing notice were posted to the project website. In addition, an email distribution list of over 80 people who had submitted inquiries to the project website was created and notices of availability were sent to the people on this list.

For detailed information on the public hearings and responses to comments, please see Volume II of this FEA/EIR.

#### **4.4.3 PUBLIC HEARING FORMAT AND CONTENT**

The public hearings had a combined open house/formal public hearing format. The open house occurred from 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm, during which attendees could circulate among five exhibit stations and ask questions of or give input directly to members of the project team. The formal public hearing began at 7:00 p.m. and was recorded by a court reporter. A project overview was presented, followed by the formal hearing/comment period on the Draft EA/EIR. A panel of key members of the project team was present to respond to questions requesting clarification or brief points of information, as appropriate.

##### **Contra Costa County Meeting in Orinda**

The Contra Costa County public hearing took place on June 7, 2006 from 6:00 pm to 8:21 pm at the Orinda Community Center and was attended by approximately 69 members of the community. The hearing officer was Administrative Law Judge Michael Cohn, State of California, and the local official was Amy Worth from the Orinda City Council. Sixteen people requested to speak at this meeting, and three comment cards were submitted.

##### **Alameda County Meeting in Oakland**

The Alameda County public hearing was held on June 15, 2006 from 6:00 pm to 9:49 pm at Claremont Middle School in the Rockridge neighborhood of Oakland and was attended by approximately 113 community members. The hearing officer was Administrative Law Judge Michael Cohn, State of California. Local officials in attendance included Jane Brunner, Oakland City Council District 1 and Berenise Herrera, State Senator Don Perata's Staff. Some 57 individuals requested to speak at this meeting and 14 comment cards were submitted. In addition, students from Ms. Leslie's Second Grade class at Chabot Elementary School asked to display an exhibit they had prepared as a class project, and five students read comments into the public record.

The comment cards and comments of the individuals who requested to speak are included in Volume II, Chapter 9, of the Caldecott Improvement Project Final Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report.

#### **4.4.4 Project Web-Site**

A project web-site (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist4/caldecott/>) has been assembled for the public to acquire information about the Caldecott Improvement Project. Project information such as public meeting notices and visual simulations of the project are placed on the web site. The site also allows the public to become involved with the project. Individuals who requested to be part of the project's mailing list were sent project information as it became available for the public.