

4.0 Comments and Coordination

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. It helps the Department determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation, the level of analysis required, and to identify potential impacts and mitigation measures and related environmental requirements. Agency consultation and public participation for the Build Alternative have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including: project development team meetings, interagency coordination meetings, and public meetings. 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 DOCUMENT COORDINATION

4.1.1 PUBLIC AND AGENCY SCOPING PROCESS

English and Spanish newspaper ads notifying the general public of a scoping meeting for the project were placed in the Vallejo Times Herald and the Crónicas on January 11, 2011 and January 15, 2011, respectively. The public scoping meeting was held for the project on January 26, 2011 at Cooper Elementary School in Vallejo between 6:30 pm and 8:30 pm. Approximately 37 people attended the meeting. The scoping meeting was organized as an open house, with informational stations displaying exhibit boards staffed by representatives from the Solano Transportation Authority (STA), the Department, the County of Solano, and the City of Vallejo. The exhibit boards portrayed the following subjects: project improvements and location; project purpose and need; current transportation issues; environmental issues and constraints; overview of the environmental review process; and anticipated project schedule.

There were eight written comments submitted at the January 26 scoping meeting. Two comment sheets were mailed to the STA and six e-mails were received via fairgroundsdriveproject@gmail.com. The following agencies provided comment letters : the California Department of Fish and Game, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, and the California Transportation Commission. Common issues raised were about environmental concerns, the scope of the project, property acquisition, community participation, and the availability of environmental documents.

4.1.2 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TEAM AND AGENCY CONSULTATION MEETINGS

A Project Development Team (PDT) was established consisting of the Department, STA, City of Vallejo and Solano County. PDT meetings have occurred regularly over the past twelve months and will continue to occur throughout the remainder of the environmental and project approval process. The PDT represents various fields of expertise including design, environmental review, traffic operations, and project management and convenes to review the project status, address issues as they arise and provide overall direction throughout the project development process.

In addition to the PDT there are several other public agencies involved in environmental clearance and permitting of the Build Alternative. These agencies include the U.S Army Corps of Engineers, U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, and Regional Water Quality Control Board.

A field review of the preliminary wetland delineation was conducted with the USACE on December 8, 2011. A map of those jurisdictional aquatic features has been submitted to the USACE for verification. The results of biological review for the project, which are presented in **2.3, Biological Environment**, of this EIR/EA, support a no effect determination for federally-listed species of wildlife and flora. Therefore, no coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding potential effect to wildlife species is required at this time. During the final design phase of the project, the USFWS will be asked to issue a formal concurrence with the “no effect” determination approved by the Department’s biologists. Coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Board and the CDFG regarding the streambed alteration agreement (Section 1602) and Section 401 Certification would also be conducted during the detailed design phase prior to submitting a permit application.

4.1.3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Document

A Notice of Availability was circulated to the project mailing list and to the various parties listed in the Distribution List (see **Chapter 6.0, Distribution List**). The notice provided information on the project, where the environmental document can be reviewed, the address to which comments should be sent, and the close of the comment period.

Public Meetings

A public meeting was held on January 18, 2012 to provide information and answer questions about the Build Alternative. Invitation letters were sent to property owners whose residence or business may potentially be directly impact by the project. Thirteen property owners and residents signed in at the meeting and one written comment was received.

A public meeting will also be held on October 11, 2012 during the 45-day review period of this document. The intent of the public meeting is to solicit comments and receive input from the public and agencies on the environmental analyses and conclusions presented in this environmental document. Comments will be taken into consideration for the final draft of this document.

4.1.4 NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION

In February 2011, a Sacred Lands File search was conducted by the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) to determine if there were known cultural sites within or near the Build Alternative's area of potential affect (APE). Following the records search, the NAHC stated that the file search showed no recorded resources within the APE.

The NAHC also provided list of interested Native American groups and individuals in the project area and region. Letters requesting input from interested parties were sent to the Native American groups and individuals in April 2011. Mr. Reno Keoni Franklin, Director of Cultural Resources and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, requested more specific information about the project, including a more detailed project description, which was provided. Mr. Marshall McKay, Yocha Dehe Wintun Tribal Chairman, stated that the Yocha Dehe have a cultural in the project area and stated their intention to initiate consultation with the Department and STA. Mr. McKay requested a project timeline and the latest cultural study. The Department provided Mr. McKay with the draft cultural resources report. In response to the request for formal consultation, the project was discussed at the quarterly meeting of the Department's Office of Cultural Resource Studies and the Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation. Discussion of the project focused on the cultural resource report prepped to date, post mile 317, and the potential for archaeological testing for buried resources in the APE.

Mr. Kesner Flores of the Cortina Band of Indians responded, stating that they would like to monitor construction activities at the location of sensitive resources, noting that there is a potential that more material could be encountered. Mr. Flores also requested that Patwin Wintun Cultural Management Response Plan be followed if unexpected cultural resources are encountered, and if cultural resources are discovered during project activities that he be notified. The Department responded with a letter that discussed their procedures for monitoring, and how they ensure the dignified treatment and disposition of Native American Human remains and associated grave artifacts.

Mr. Dave Jones of the Wintun Environmental Protection Agency stated that the project area is on the south edge of their ancestral territory, and that they have little information of that area. He asked that if cultural materials are encountered during the project, that they be notified.

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