

Chapter 3 **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. Agency consultation and public participation for this project have been accomplished through a variety of formal and informal methods, including: project development team meetings, public hearings, presentations, city council meetings, and interchange area stakeholder meetings.

A Notice of Intent and Notice of Availability were filed and posted with the City of Paso Robles City Clerk and the County of San Luis Obispo County Clerk Recorder on May 27, 2008. The Initial Study/Environmental Assessment and Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration was made available for public review at the City of Paso Robles Public Library (1000 Spring Street, Paso Robles), City of Paso Robles Public Works Department (1000 Spring Street, Paso Robles), and Caltrans District 5 (50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo) during the 45-day public review period that started May 27, 2008 and ended July 11, 2008.

This chapter summarizes the results of Caltrans' efforts to identify, address, and resolve project-related issues through early and continuing coordination.

Community and Stakeholder Interaction

The City has been in communication with the general public and stakeholders within the project limits during the project's development. Public meetings were held in the form of presentations at city council meetings and interchange area stakeholder meetings. This includes a city council meeting conducted on February 20, 2001 to present the various project alternatives under consideration to the general public and interested agencies.

In early 2002, representatives from Caltrans, the City, County, and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments met with property owners and developers to discuss the proposed project alternatives and traffic projections. Subsequently, the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments took the lead responsibility for and prepared the traffic volume/jurisdictional split forecasting for the proposed project. Furthermore, affected landowners and developers have agreed to conditions of approval that relate to the future interchange, including an agreement to not contest the formation of an

assessment district in the area; that assessment is currently in formation by the City, in cooperation with the County.

Finally, the City, County, and San Luis Obispo Council of Governments have entered into a cooperative agreement to ensure that this project would be studied and improved when the Target Shopping Center (area of southwest quadrant of the interchange) was built. Caltrans is a party to this agreement.

Public Participation

On June 25, 2008, a public hearing was held at the City of Paso Robles' Chambers Building at 1000 Spring Street from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Twenty-three people attended the public hearing, which was held as an open house with various workstations set up to inform the public about the project. Various City and Caltrans staff members and representatives were available to answer questions from the public.

Comment card tables were available for submitting comments in writing. A court recorder was also available to document oral comments from the public for the record; comments from seven attendees were recorded by the court recorder. Recurring issues and questions raised at the public hearing included the width of the realigned Theatre Drive, timing of the project, aesthetic impacts, impacts to oak trees, roundabout operations, and potential impacts to existing businesses.

Comments and Responding to Comments

As mentioned above, comments were received on the Initial Study/Environmental Assessment and Mitigated Negative Declaration during the public availability period and at the public hearing. From May 27, 2008 to July 11, 2008, the following comments were received on the project:

- Six written comment letters—one from a resident, two from engineering firms representing two different property owners, one from a property management firm for the nearby retail center, one from a legal firm representing a property owner and one from the County of San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District
- Five email comments—three from residents, one from a consultant with interest in roundabouts and one set from the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments representative

- Seven comments via court recorder from attendees of the public hearing were received.

An additional comment letter dated September 9, 2008 from the San Luis Obispo County Department of Planning and Building was received after the comment period had expired; it is included in the response to comments. Copies of the written correspondence (comment letters) and responses to each comment are included in Appendix G of this document.

Native American Coordination

On July 24, 2006, a request for a records search of the Sacred Lands File was sent to the Native American Heritage Commission. The Native American Heritage Commission indicated that no resources were found in the Sacred Lands File and identified tribes and individuals that have ancestral ties to the project area. On August 23, 2006, letters were submitted to a total of 25 tribal representatives identified by the Native American Heritage Commission (refer to the Historic Property Survey Report [2007] for a detailed listing).

Additionally, on November 8 and 9, 2006, project representatives met with representatives of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council regarding the project. The meeting was scheduled to address tribal concerns regarding the proposed project as well as development projects in general that are conducted on Chumash traditional lands. Refer to the Historic Property Survey Report (2007) for further discussion regarding Native American coordination.

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