

# SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

## Volume I: Discussion



### **New State Route 138/E-220**

Palmdale to Apple Valley (SR-14 to SR-18)

California Department of Transportation  
Division of Environmental Planning (MS-16A)  
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SCH No.: 2010091084  
Caltrans Project No.: 0700000080 (EA: 16720)



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Introduction

The High Desert Corridor (HDC) project is being undertaken by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in coordination with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) and other partner agencies. The HDC project involves the construction of a new approximately 63-mile long east-west freeway/expressway, and possible toll or rail facility, between State Route (SR) 14 in Los Angeles County and SR-18 in San Bernardino County. The HDC was identified as the E-220 in the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act; A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and is officially designated as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System. The project is proposed as a means of improving mobility and access for people and goods in the rapidly growing Antelope, Victor, and Apple Valley areas of Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties.

To comply with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an environmental impact report/statement (EIR/EIS) is being prepared. CEQA and NEPA both encourage public participation throughout the development of an EIR/EIS. Scoping is a means of soliciting input, early in the development process, concerning the project purpose and need, the range of alternatives to be analyzed, and the scope of the analysis to be included in the environmental document.

This Scoping Summary Report (SSR) has been prepared to document the scoping activities conducted to solicit input from the public and government agencies, to identify public and agency concerns and to define the environmental issues and alternatives to be examined in the EIR/EIS. This report covers outreach conducted during the formal scoping period of September 24, 2010 through November 1, 2010. Public and agency outreach efforts will continue throughout the project development process.

## Scoping Activities

Extensive efforts have been made to encourage public and agency participation in the scoping process. These efforts are described in Section 2 of this SSR and included:

- Publishing a Notice of Intent and Notice of Preparation (NOI/NOP)
- Establishing a web presence for convenient public access
- Mailing over 25,000 postcards to residents and property owners
- Mailing letters to appropriate local, state and federal agencies and elected officials
- Posting scoping notices at public libraries
- Publishing scoping notices in local newspapers
- Providing a HDC presentation at the Inland Empire WTS luncheon
- Holding one (1) formal agency scoping meeting
- Holding four (4) formal public scoping meetings

It should be noted that over 600 people attended these last 3 listed presentations on the HDC.

Public and agency outreach activities, including those anticipated to take place in the near future, are shown in Figure ES-1 below.

**Figure ES-1. Project Outreach Activities (Sept. 2010 through March 2011).**

September	October	November	December	January	February	March
● Project Logo						>>
● Project Website						>>
Formal Scoping Period		(Sept. 24 through Nov. 1)				
		Post Scoping Period		(Nov. 1 through Dec. 31)		
● Notice of Intent (Sept. 24)						
● Notice of Preparation (Sept. 28)						
● Formal Scoping Meetings (Sept. 27-30)						
				6002 Agency Meetings		(proposed - mid-Feb.)
				Community Meetings - proposed)		>>

### Comments

Comments were received from 214 different agencies, community groups, members of the public, elected officials, and other interested parties via letters, emails, comment cards, and individuals' oral testimony. These comments are summarized in Section 3 of the SSR; all written comments are also included in their entirety in Appendix A.

Written comments from the public covered a wide range of issues. Primary areas of concern included the project purpose and need, the alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS, potential impacts to community, cultural and biological resources, and mitigation measures. Public spoken comments focused primarily on needing more information about the project alternatives, design features, funding, community concerns, and right-of-way acquisition.

Agency comments often focused on the jurisdictional responsibilities of the particular agency and included issues such as purpose and need for the project, design features, traffic impacts, permits and the environmental document. All the agencies involved are requesting that future project information as it becomes available be promptly provided.

Overall, the scoping process has provided a wide array of comments from the public and agencies potentially affected by the project. These comments will help guide the development of the project and preparation of the environmental document. Caltrans' goal is to ensure that all relevant CEQA/NEPA resource issues are fully analyzed and documented in the EIR/EIS.

Caltrans and its partner agencies will continue with their outreach efforts in an attempt to fully engage the public and agencies in the development of this project.

## Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	2
1.1 Project History.....	2
1.2 Project Overview.....	3
1.3 Scoping Overview.....	5
1.4 Project Milestone Dates.....	5
2. OUTREACH EFFORTS .....	6
2.1 NOI/NOP .....	6
2.2 Project Logo .....	6
2.3 Web Site.....	7
2.4 Public Notices.....	7
3. SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS .....	10
3.1 Methodology.....	10
3.2 Public Comments .....	10
3.3 Agency Comments .....	18
3.4 Key Issues.....	21
4. FUTURE OUTREACH EFFORTS .....	22
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	23

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1-1	Proposed Alternatives	3
Figure 2-1	Project Logo	6
Figure 2-2	Public Outreach Areas	7

## **List of Tables**

Table 1-1	Project Milestones	5
Table 2-1	Public Libraries – Scoping Meeting Notices	8
Table 2-2	Newspapers with Scoping Notices	8
Table 2-3	Scoping Meeting Locations	9
Table 3-1	Comment Submission by Date and Media Type	10
Table 3-2	Opinion of Project Based on Submittal Type	11
Table 3-3	Opinion of Project Based on Meeting Attended	11
Table 3-4	Public Comments by Topic	11
Table 3-5	agency Comments by Type	18

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A	Comments Received
Appendix B	Public Notices
Appendix C	Scoping Meeting Exhibits

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CALTRANS	State of California Department of Transportation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Study
FTA	Federal Transit Authority
HDC	High Desert Corridor
HSR	Historic Survey Report
JPA	Joint Powers Authority
METRO	Metropolitan Transportation Authority
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOP	Notice of Preparation
P3	Public Private Partnership
SCAG	Southern Californian Association of Governments
SCLA	Southern California Logistics Airport
TDM	Transportation Demand Management
TSM	Transportation System Management

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# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Project History**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (METRO) have initiated studies for a proposed project to construct a new freeway/expressway called the High Desert Corridor (HDC). The HDC is proposed to extend from State Route 14 (SR-14) in the City of Palmdale (Los Angeles County) to State Route 18 (SR-18) in the Town of Apple Valley (San Bernardino County).

The HDC has a long history and has been the subject of numerous previous studies. It was originally conceived of in the 1970s as a metropolitan by-pass to provide an alternate route for vehicles traveling from Interstate 5 (I-5) to communities to the east such as San Bernardino, Victorville, Barstow, and Las Vegas via I-15.

Between 1992 and 2002, Caltrans, in cooperation with the High Desert Corridor Steering Committee, prepared a Regionally Significant Transportation Investment Study (RSTIS) which provided documentation of the need for an improved transportation infrastructure to accommodate the expected continuing growth in the rapidly developing Antelope Valley and Victor Valley areas of Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties.

In 2003, Metro completed the Alternatives Development and Screening for the North County Combined Highway Corridor Study (NCCHCS) which recommended strategies for addressing the high volume of truck traffic travelling north and south on I-5. The HDC was one of the preferred strategy improvements identified in that study.

In 2005, the High Desert Corridor, identified as the E220, was officially recognized in Section 1305 of SAFETEA-LU (the federal transportation legislation) as a High Priority Corridor on the National Highway System between Los Angeles and Las Vegas via Palmdale and Victorville.

In 2006, the High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority (JPA) was formed to oversee the financing and construction of a 66-mile stretch of freeway corridor from State Route 14 in the Palmdale/Lancaster area through the high desert cities of Adelanto, Victorville, and Apple Valley – the High Desert Corridor. Its members include the County of San Bernardino, the County of Los Angeles, the Town of Apple Valley and the Cities of Adelanto, Victorville, Lancaster and Palmdale.

In 2007 and 2009, environmental studies were begun on two small components of the HDC. The City of Victorville, with oversight from Caltrans District 8, began work on the High Desert Corridor – Phase 1 project in 2007; this project extended between SR-395 and SR-18 on the eastern end of the corridor. On the western end, Caltrans District 7 began working in 2009 on the New State Route 138 project between SR-14 and 100<sup>th</sup> Street East. During the course of conducting these studies and coordinating with regulatory and resource agencies for the proposed projects, it was determined that they should be combined into one larger project -

the High Desert Corridor – which incorporates the two “end pieces” and fill the gap in between them.

METRO has partnered with Caltrans, the High Desert Corridor JPA and other agencies to expedite the proposed project. Caltrans has the delegated authority from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to approve environmental documents, which should accelerate the environmental clearance process.

### 1.2 Project Overview

The proposed project is located in the high desert area of Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties, north of the San Gabriel/San Bernardino Mountains and the heavily populated areas of those two counties. The proposed route would run primarily in an east – west direction between SR-14 and SR-18 and extend for approximately 63 miles (Fig. 1-1).

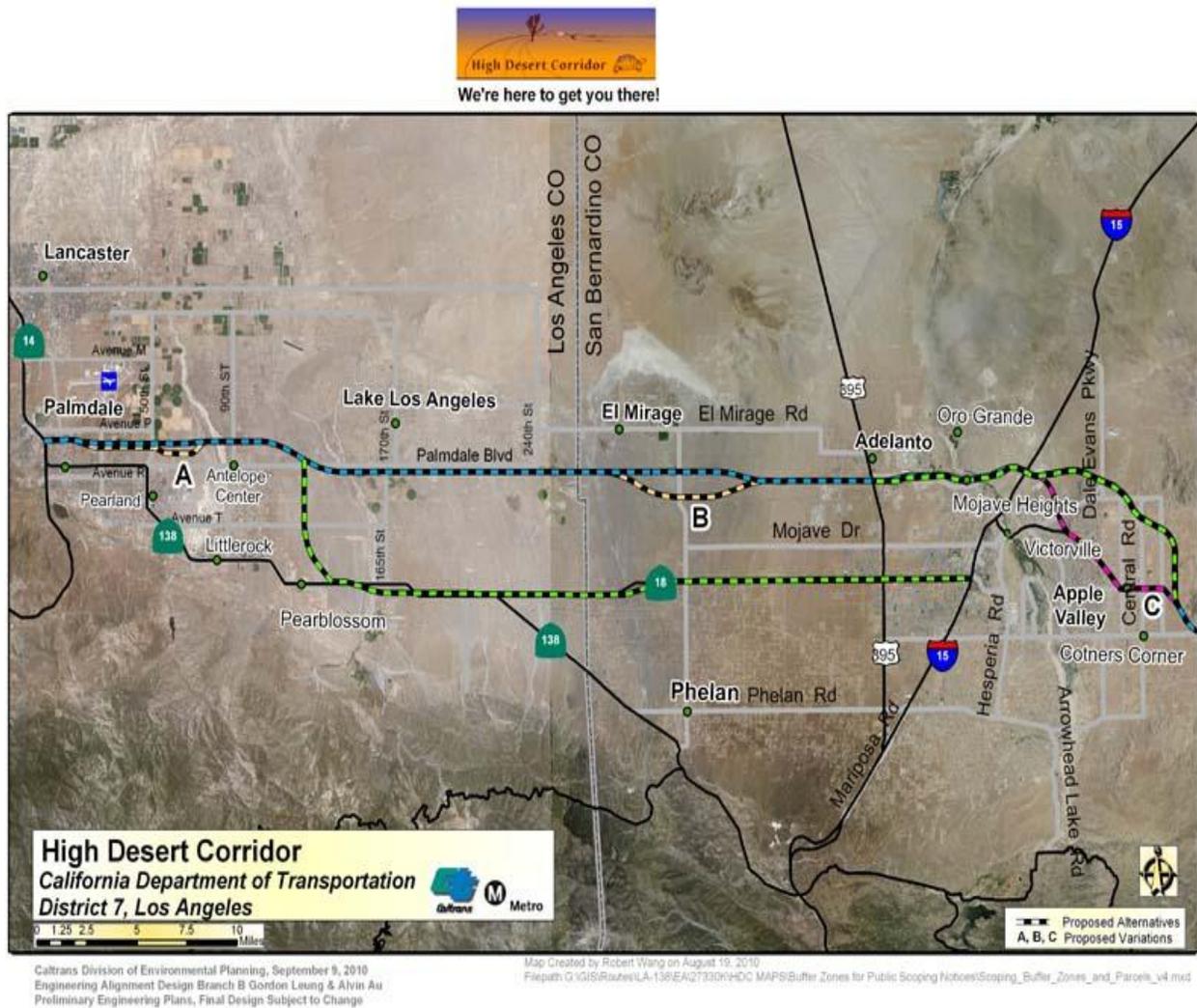


Figure 1-1, Proposed Alternatives.

Improvements to this corridor are considered necessary to provide for the existing and projected traffic demand attributed to residential growth and increasing commercial developments in the Antelope, Victor, and Apple Valley areas of Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties. This growth is resulting in inadequate capacity and accessibility along the existing east-west roadways as well as an increasing demand for goods movement corridors and access to regional airports.

Several alternatives have been proposed to satisfy the purpose and need for this project; they will be evaluated, in part, based upon the expected traffic demands along the corridor. Traffic Studies are currently underway to project future traffic demands. The alternatives being studied are:

1. No-Build; Future Conditions in the HDC study area without implementing the project.
2. Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM). This includes various operational investments, policies, and low capital cost improvements aimed at improving goods movement, passenger auto and transit travel in the High Desert Corridor study area.
3. Freeway/Expressway. This would consist of a route with a controlled-access freeway in some areas and an expressway in others, depending on what is warranted by traffic demand. Interchange locations will be determined based upon traffic projections. Variations in the alignment in at least three locations will also be studied.
4. Freeway/Toll Way. This would consist of engineering geometrics similar to Alternative 3 with alterations made in coordination with a Public Private Partnership (P3) analysis.
5. Avenue P-8 Corridor, SR-138 and SR-18 Improvements. This would consist of engineering geometrics similar to Alternative 3 between SR-14 and approximately 125<sup>th</sup> St. East. From 125<sup>th</sup> St. East, the route would curve south until it joins the existing SR-138. The existing SR-138 and SR-18 would be widened between approximately 146<sup>th</sup> St. East and I-15. One of the segments east of I-15, as described in Alternative 3, would also be built as part of this alternative.
6. Freeway/Express Way with right-of-way for a potential High Speed Rail facility. This would consist of engineering geometrics similar to Alternative 3 with the consideration of additional right-of-way for a High Speed Rail (HSR) facility. If a HSR facility is proven to be viable, its engineering and environmental analysis would be funded by others.
7. Freeway/Toll Way with right-of-way for a potential High Speed Rail facility. This would consist of engineering geometrics similar to Alternative 4 with the consideration of additional right-of-way for a High Speed Rail (HSR) facility. This alternative would include a P3 analysis. If a HSR facility is proven to be viable, its engineering and environmental analysis would be funded by others.

Based on input that has been received at the public scoping meetings, another alternative has been evolving as Alternative 8.

8. Hybrid Alternative. This would consist of a combination of all or some of the previously identified alternatives, whose elements (freeway, expressway, rail, TSM/TDM, etc.) would be pieced together to best fit the needs of each section of the corridor. The determination of which elements to use, and at which locations, would be determined based on the results of the traffic study, environmental studies and public input.

### 1.3 Scoping Overview

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires state and local agencies to analyze and disclose the potential environmental impacts of major projects. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the federal law that requires federal agencies to analyze potential environmental impacts of major federal actions. The proposed project is subject to review under both CEQA and NEPA and an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) will be prepared.

Scoping is a process that occurs in the early stages of the development of a comprehensive environmental document that satisfies the requirements of both CEQA and NEPA. It involves reaching out to the public and governmental agencies potentially affected by the project to determine the focus and content of the EIR/EIS. More specifically, its purpose is to solicit input concerning the project purpose and need, the range of alternatives to be analyzed, and the scope of the analysis to be included in the environmental document.

This Scoping Summary Report describes the process undertaken by Caltrans as the Lead Agency, as well as by Metro and the other agency project partners, to involve the public and government agencies, to obtain comments on the purpose and need of the proposed project, proposed alternatives, potential environmental issues and impacts, and the scope of the environmental document. In addition, this report summarizes the issues and comments raised during the formal scoping period (September 24, 2010 through November 1, 2010) and contains the actual comments that were received.

### 1.4 Project Milestone Dates

Any large project that will be completed over a period of several months needs to have defined milestones and deadlines to help keep it on track. The table below shows the target dates (or time periods)

**Table 1-1, Project Milestones**

Milestone	Target Date
Public Outreach	Ongoing
Notice of Intent	September 24, 2010
Public Scoping Meetings	September 27-30, 2010
Complete Draft EIS/EIR	Fall 2012
Public Hearings	Winter 2012
Complete Final EIR/EIS	Spring 2013

for the major milestones associated with this project.

## 2. OUTREACH EFFORTS

### 2.1 NOI/NOP

The scoping process is the means by which Caltrans conducts its initial outreach and notifies the public and governmental agencies about the proposed project. This process is initiated with the publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI) in the Federal Register and the preparation/distribution of the Notice of Preparation.

The NOI signals the intent of a federal agency to prepare an EIS. The NOI for this project was published on September 24, 2010 in the Office of the Federal Register in compliance with federal regulation 40 CFR 1508.28. The NOI included background information about the project including purpose and need and a brief description of the alternatives. It also provided information about the agency and public scoping meeting locations, contact information, and how to provide comments on the project.

The NOP signals the intent of a California state or local agency to prepare an EIR. The NOP for this project was posted at the State Clearinghouse (SCH #2010091084) and circulated to public agencies and other interested parties in compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines on September 28, 2010. The NOP notified the public that the EIR was being prepared and provided a brief description of the project and information on how to provide comments on the project.

### 2.2 Project Logo

A small but important part of the outreach process involves providing a meaningful, easily recognizable and memorable image for the project. To that end, a project logo (Fig. 2-1) was created by the Caltrans District 07, Graphics Department. The logo depicts the sunset/sunrise of the high desert area as the road traverses through the hills and buttes of this area. The curved road symbolizes a commitment to resource avoidance. The Desert Tortoise, Mojave Ground Squirrel and Joshua tree represent an awareness of the sensitive flora and fauna that inhabit the high desert region. The image seeks to provide a link between the project and Caltrans' goal of being good stewards of the environment.

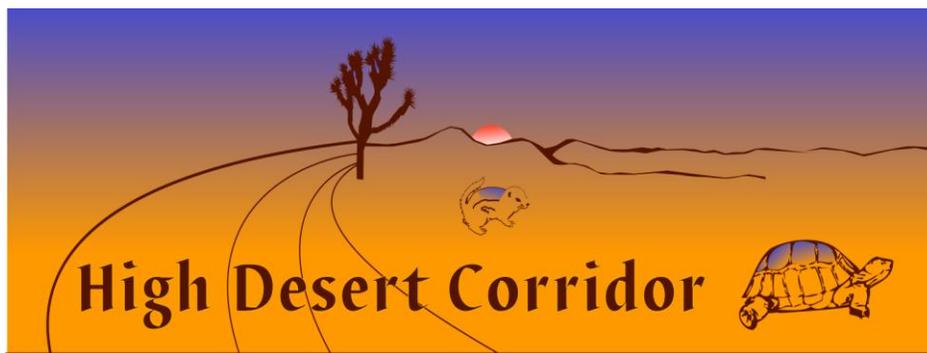


Figure 2-1, Project Logo.

## 2.3 Web Site

Another important aspect of outreach involves providing a quick and easy way to disseminate information about the project as it becomes available. The following websites have been provided for that purpose:

Caltrans website address:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/travel/projects/138hdc/>

METRO website address:

[http://www.metro.net/projects/progress\\_tracker/byregion/north\\_los\\_angeles\\_county/](http://www.metro.net/projects/progress_tracker/byregion/north_los_angeles_county/)

San Bernardino County website address:

[http://www.sbcounty.gov/dpw/transportation/high\\_desert\\_corridor.asp](http://www.sbcounty.gov/dpw/transportation/high_desert_corridor.asp)

The Caltrans web address was included on all public notices concerning the project.

## 2.4 Public Notices

Both CEQA and NEPA require that the lead agency (Caltrans) conduct an early and open process for determining the scope of the issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. In addition to publication of the NOI/NOP, several methods were used to notify the affected communities about the project and encourage their participation in the scoping process.

Because of the large scale of this project, GIS mapping was used to identify the parcels and property owners within a ½-mile buffer around the proposed alignment (Fig. 2-2).

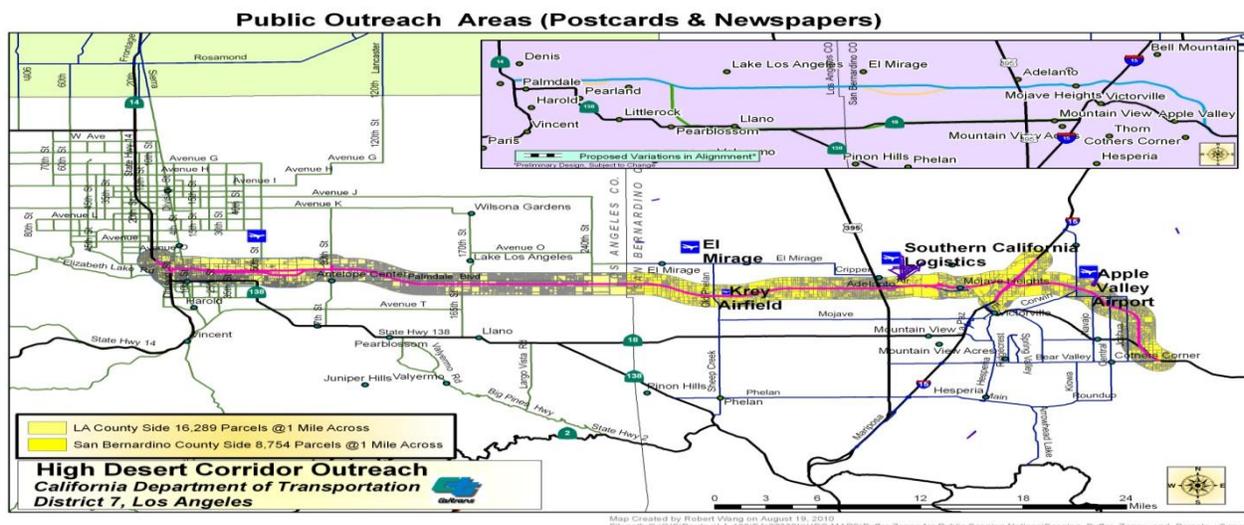


Figure 2-2, Public Outreach Areas.

From this information, a contact list was generated and a total of 25,040 scoping postcards were prepared and sent out to notify the public about the upcoming scoping meetings. The postcards were sent out in two separate mailings on September 14 and 16, 2010.

Public meeting notices were also sent to the following public libraries in the communities where the meetings were to be held:

**Table 2-1, Public Libraries Scoping Meeting Notices**

Apple Valley, Newton T. Bass Branch 14901 Dale Evans Parkway Apple Valley, California 92307-3061	Lancaster Regional Library 601 West Lancaster Boulevard, Lancaster, California 93534-3398
Palmdale City Library 700 East Palmdale Boulevard Palmdale, California 93550	Victorville City Library 15011 Circle Drive Victorville, California 92395

The notices, in both English and Spanish, were posted at the library kiosks and could easily be viewed by the public. Scoping notices were also published in local newspapers as shown in Table 2-2.

**Table 2-2, Newspapers with Scoping Notices**

Apple Valley News September 24, 2010	Antelope Valley Press September 23 & 26, 2010
Daily Press September 19 & 23, 2010	Mountaineer Progress September 23, 2010
The Sun (San Bernardino) September 22 & 26, 2010	La Opinion (Spanish) September 20 & 26 2010

In addition, letters were sent to the appropriate local, state and federal agencies and elected officials notifying them of the formal initiation of studies. The scoping notices, sample letters, and lists of agencies and elected officials invited to attend the scoping meetings is included in Appendix B.

### **2.2.1 Public Meetings**

One agency scoping meeting and four public scoping meetings were held to provide information and solicit input about the project. The meeting locations and times are shown in Table 2-3.

**Table 2-3, Scoping Meeting Locations**

<b>Agency meeting:</b>	
September 27, 2010, 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. City of Adelanto Parks and Recreation Center 11555 Cortez Ave. Adelanto, CA 92301	
<b>Public meetings:</b>	
September 27, 2010, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. Larry Chimbole Cultural Center 38350 N. Sierra Highway Palmdale, CA. 93550	September 28, 2010, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. Lancaster City Hall Emergency Operations Center 44933 Fern Avenue, Lancaster, CA. 93534
September 29, 2010, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. Town of Apple Valley Parks and Recreation Department, Development Services – Conference Center, 14955 Dale Evans Parkway, Apple Valley, CA. 92307	September 30, 2010, 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. City of Victorville Conference Room D 14343 Civic Drive, Victorville, CA. 92393

At the agency meeting, an overview of the project and description of the alternatives were provided to agency representatives. Concerns about the project were discussed and questions were answered. The importance of Inter-Agency coordination was also emphasized.

The public scoping meetings were attended by at least 369 people (some people may not have signed in). Based on the sign-in sheets, attendance at each meeting was as follows:

- Sept. 27 – 96 people
- Sept. 28 – 44 people
- Sept. 29 – 142 people
- Sept. 30 – 87 people

The meetings were held in an open house type forum and the attendees were invited to sign the attendance sheet, view maps and exhibits, ask questions of staff and listen to a presentation about the project. Following the presentation, a microphone was passed around and the public was invited to ask questions and provide comments. A Spanish interpreter was present at each of the meetings and all information handed out at the meetings was provided in English and Spanish. Audio and video recordings were made at each meeting for future reference. A copy of the slide presentation and other information provided at the meetings is included in Appendix C.

### 3. SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS

The formal scoping period extended from September 24, 2010 through November 1, 2010. Caltrans accepted comments on the proposed project throughout the entire scoping period and beyond; all comments were accepted regardless of the date they were received. Comments were received from a total of 214 different agencies, community groups, members of the public, elected officials, and other interested parties via letters, emails, comment cards, and individuals' oral testimony. These comments are summarized below; all written comments are also included in their entirety in Appendix A.

#### 3.1 Methodology

Agency and public comments have been organized to capture comments, identify issues and track contact information. All comments have been grouped according to topic and summarized. The list of topics was developed based on the Caltrans EIS/EIR annotated outline, which generally follows the EIS topics suggested by FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8a. The comment database was set up to identify comment trends to support development of the EIS/EIR. Analysis and summaries can be found below.

#### 3.2 Public Comments

##### 3.2.1 Public Comments by Topic:

543 comments were received from 206 individual commenters via several different media types. Table 3-1 shows the breakdown of how comments were submitted and which meeting the commenters attended. It can be seen that the majority of comments were submitted either verbally at the scoping meetings or via the comment cards handed out at those meetings. It can also be seen that the meeting held in Palmdale seemed to generate the most comments; however, a date could not be placed on a number of comments, even though it was clear that they originated near the eastern end of the project.

**Table 3-1, Comment Submission by Date and Media Type**

Media Type	Sept. 27 (Palm)	Sept. 28 (Lan)	Sept. 29 (A.V.)	Sept. 30 (V.V.)	Unknown	# of Commenters
Post Cards received	21	12	24	6	4	67
Letters received	2	0	5	0	16	23
e-mails received	0	0	0	0	4	4
Speakers at scoping meetings	40	15	23	34	0	112
Total number of commenters	63	27	52	40	24	206

Tables 3-2 and 3-3 show a breakdown of the tone of the comments received based on how they were submitted and which meeting was attended, respectively.

**Table 3-2, Opinion of Project Based on Submittal Type.**

	Generally Favorable	Generally Opposed	Opposed to one or all alts. east of I-15	Neutral	Total
Postcards	30	9	4	24	67
Letters received	9	8	2	4	23
e-mails received	1	0	0	3	4
Speakers at scoping meetings	3	14	1	94	112
Total number of commenters	43	31	7	125	206

**Table 3-3, Opinion of Project Based on Meeting Attended.**

Postcards	Sept. 27	Sept. 28	Sept. 29	Sept. 30	Unknown	# of Commenters
Generally Favorable	13	4	16	5	5	43
Generally Opposed	2	1	20	1	7	31
Opposed to one or all alts east of I-15	0	0	4	0	3	7
Neutral	48	22	12	34	9	125
Total	63	27	52	40	24	206

Comments were received on a variety of topics. Written comments expressed an interest in the project purpose and need, the alternatives to be analyzed in the EIS, potential impacts to community, cultural and biological resources, and mitigation measures. Issues of travel accessibility and traffic safety were also raised. Public spoken comments focused primarily on needing more information about the project alternatives, design features, funding, community concerns, and right-of-way acquisition. Table 3-4 details the number of individual comments (written and spoken combined) that were made by topic area.

**Table 3-4, Public Comments by Topic**

Topic Category	# of Comments
<b>General</b>	
Construction Schedule	2
Request for More Project Information	22
Website	8
Funding	11
EIR/EIS Process	11
Existing Environment	18

Environmental Consequences	16
<b>Purpose and Need</b>	
General	8
<b>Alternatives</b>	
General	30
Design Features	65
Modes – Transit	8
Modes –Rail	14
Modes – Highway	8
Modes - Trucks	14
Modes	17
Tolls	15
<b>Human Environment</b>	
Traffic Study	7
System Linkage	18
Transportation, Travel Patterns Accessibility and Highway/Traffic Safety	27
Traffic Congestion	13
Traffic Capacity	12
Neighborhoods and Community Cohesion	33
Relocation	26
Economic Consequences	14
Community Facilities and Public Services	14
Environmental Justice	1
Land Use	22
Agriculture	2
Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Use	2
Economic Vitality	18
Historic Resources	13
View Shed	3
Light Disturbance	4
<b>Physical Environment</b>	
Noise	8
Air Quality	8
Ground Water Resources	6
Flooding	10
<b>Biological Environment</b>	
Natural – Wildlife	8
Mitigation	7
<b>Grand Total Scoping Written/Oral Comments Received</b>	<b>543</b>

### **3.2.2 Public Comments Summary:**

The following is a summarized list of the comments and question received from the public, written and oral, separated by topic.

#### **General**

##### **Request for More Project Information**

- Please send updates and next meeting dates.
- Add me to your project mailing list.

##### **Start of Construction**

- What determines where and when construction will start?
- Wants to get his business involved with the HDC.

##### **Website**

- For future meetings, please consider video streaming on the internet; it would allow more people to watch due to meetings being held at distant locations.
- Do you have all the project information on the web?

##### **Funding**

- There is not enough funding for this project.
- Concerns about the budget for the project and where funding would come from.

##### **EIR/EIS Process**

- The EIR/EIS is not covering the eastern area of the HDC sufficiently.
- The study should include the area east of Apple Valley to the state line and down to the I-10.
- Concerns about what type of studies will be done for this project and what they will tell us.
- Will the environmental document show how this project will affect Little Rock and Pearblossom?
- When will the Environmental Document be completed?

##### **Environmental Consequences**

- Please follow whatever route will be least disturbing to the area.
- The freeway will have detrimental effects to the environment.
- Please don't destroy the environment with a freeway.

#### **Purpose and Need**

- There is not enough justification to build this corridor.
- The HDC area is a trade route and needs to include Long Term Planning which should include Yucca Valley.
- Concerns about why this project is being built.
- What good will come from this?
- We need the freeway and it will help the community.
- What about the SR-138 project currently in construction?
- Just fix what we already have.

## **Alternatives**

### **General**

- Can you build the road as to my suggestions?
- My house is along one of the alternatives; please choose a different one.
- An alternative for the eastern terminus of the project needs to be more detailed.
- Do not build in the Town of Apple Valley.
- We need more information on the alternatives.
- Avenue T should be an alternative.
- Can Caltrans use Thomas Guides to show where the project will be located?

### **Design Features**

- Concern about how design features will affect the various areas and properties.
- Concern that the corridor will be close to, or will go to/through, private property.
- Concern about the location of on/off ramps and public input into those decisions.
- What will the width of the freeway/expressway easement be?
- Will SR-138 change?
- Can you avoid using Ave Q-12?

### **Modes – Transit**

- How much right-of-way is needed for a transit alternative?
- How will this project affect local transportation?

### **Modes – Rail**

- Various proposed rail transportation projects should be considered with this project.
- Why are you looking at rail?
- How much right-of-way is needed for a rail alternative?
- Project should purchase rail right of way.
- Where would the rail go? Would it stop at the airports?
- What about light rail?

### **Modes – Highway**

- Highways help people in many different ways.
- The highway from the SR-14 to I-15 is the only area that should be improved.
- Motorists will have a dangerous merge at the eastern terminus ending at Joshua Road at highway-18.

### **Modes – Trucks**

- Do not toll the truck drivers or the goods they carry.
- We don't want more trucks on the roads.
- The HDC needs a Truck Bypass.
- We need more alternatives to move truck traffic.

### **Modes**

- The Freeway should be built for future demands of travel

### **Tolls**

- No tolls for public or trucks that will use this corridor.
- Tolls will increase the cost of what trucks are moving.

- Truck drivers cannot pay for this road by tolling them.
- How much will the tolls be?
- Tolls will hurt truckers and goods will cost more in this area if there are tolls.

## **Human Environment**

### **Traffic**

#### **Traffic Study**

- When will a traffic study be done?
- Does the traffic study show how the project will affect people, places and wildlife?
- I think the traffic studies show a local problem for Victorville, not a regional problem; don't build the freeway.
- What will happen to traffic on the 18 going to Lucerne Valley?
- The area needs Long Range Traffic Planning.

#### **System Linkage**

- Connecting these routes will help transport goods and bring more jobs.
- More traffic on Highway 18 in Apple Valley does not help link goods to the surrounding communities; it will increase traffic in a residential neighborhood.
- Study impacts to Route 58.
- The project does not help link travelers to SR-247.

#### **Transportation, Travel Patterns Accessibility and Highway/Traffic Safety**

- Traffic safety around this corridor is a concern.
- HDC project should end at the I-15 and not disrupt the Town of Apple Valley.
- Hwy-138 needs to be improved due to the amount of fatalities on it already.
- Traffic Study for this project does not seem realistic.
- This project is really for the airports.
- Will there be an on/off ramp at the airports?

#### **Congestion**

- HDC is a project that will help improve traffic congestion for all of Southern California.
- This project will create congestion and forced growth.

#### **Capacity**

- The roadway is unsafe and it needs to be improved.
- These alternatives will make the roads unsafe.

### **Community**

#### **Neighborhoods and Community Cohesion**

- Do not build in Apple Valley.
- We want our neighborhoods left alone.
- The freeway will affect my quality of life. We don't want it.
- This will disrupt my way of life.
- I believe this project will bring more crime to my neighborhood.

## **Relocation Impacts**

- The homes in the Town of Apple Valley are Historic and are established homes that cannot be replaced. Many residents are elderly and not able to move; please use vacant land.
- Concerns/questions about eminent domain, appraisals and the relocation process.
- Does eminent domain take into account how much I value my home?
- What if I don't like the offer?
- I don't want to move.
- My home is an historic resource; how will Caltrans appraise it?
- Does a freeway next to my home change the appraisal?
- Concern about making improvements to a property and how the project will affect those improvements.
- I farm my land and I don't want to sell it and how would Caltrans figure out the value of it?

## **Economic Consequences**

- This project will have good impacts to the area.
- The freeway will not be a benefit to the area.
- The freeway/tollway will hurt the area.
- This is forced growth.

## **Community Facilities and Public Services**

- Concern about air quality around neighborhoods and schools.
- Concern about existing infrastructures to support a freeway.
- Concern about impacts to utilities in the area.
- What is an energy corridor?

## **Environmental Justice**

- Alternative C will affect too many residents.

## **Land Use**

- The HDC project is not following planned land use for this area.
- We moved to an area where there is open land.

## **Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Use**

- Please remember the OHV use in this area and don't take it away.
- Please don't disturb the OHV use areas in the project area.

## **Economic Vitality**

- Placing a toll on the truckers will cause the prices on goods in the area to go up.
- Moving forward on this project will allow the community to grow.

## **Cultural**

### **Historic Resources**

- The homes in the Town of Apple Valley are historic; you will ruin the existing condition of the town and the community.
- My neighborhood is an historic resource and we don't want it disturbed.
- My home is an historic resource; will Caltrans take it?
- How close can the freeway get to historic sites?

## **Visual Resources**

### **View Shed**

- Don't ruin the view with a freeway.

### **Light Disturbance**

- Light disturbance will not be a problem.
- Light disturbance is what we moved away from.
- The lights will ruin the view.
- The lights will illuminate the skies.

## **Physical Environment**

### **Noise**

- Wants to know if a noise study will be done to assess how the project will affect schools, residents and wildlife.
- I don't want to hear the noise from the freeway.
- Our community does not want the noise from a freeway.
- We want quiet neighborhoods.
- Will sound walls be built?

### **Air Quality**

- Wants to know how air quality around schools and neighborhoods will be addressed.
- I am concerned about the pollution the HDC will bring.

### **Ground Water Resources**

- Caltrans will need to address the many watersheds in the project area and how to avoid them.
- There is a concern about water availability for a project of this size.

### **Flooding**

- This project could help reduce flooding.
- The area is known to flood; what will happen to the run-off?
- Concern about how this project will affect the washes and flood plains.

## **Biological Environment**

### **Natural – Wildlife**

- Caltrans will need to address the wildlife that is in the project area and how they will be affected.
- Wants to know if any studies will be done on the wildlife, such as bats.
- This freeway will affect the cougars and other wildlife and make them go away.
- Concern about the freeway being close to biological sites.
- The washes are used for wildlife crossings; how will this affect them?

### **Mitigation**

- What will be done for the environment when it gets destroyed by the freeway?

### 3.3 Agency Comments

The following agencies provided comments on the proposed project, either verbally at the agency scoping meeting or in writing in response to the NOI/NOP:

- City of Victorville
- Desert and Mountains Conservation Authority (DMCA)
- City of Los Angeles – Department of Water and Power (DWP)
- United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)
- California Public Utilities Commission (PUC)
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) – Lahontan Region

#### 3.3.1 Agency Comments by Topic:

Agency comments focused primarily on the purpose and need for the project, design features, traffic impacts, permits and the environmental document. All the agencies involved are requesting more project information as it becomes available for them to review and comment on in a continuing effort of inter-agency coordination.

Table 3-5, Agency comments by type

Topic Category	# of Comments
<b>General</b>	
Existing Environment	1
Environmental Document	3
<b>Purpose and Need</b>	
General	4
<b>Alternatives</b>	
General	4
No-Build	1
Design Features	9
TSM/TDM	2
Rail	3
Transit	1
Toll	1
<b>Human Environment</b>	
Traffic	2
Community Growth	3
Historical/Archaeological	2
Native Americans	3
<b>Physical Environment</b>	

Air Quality	3
Flooding	3
Water and Wetlands	3
<b>Biological Environment</b>	
Wildlife/Habitat	2
Mitigation	2
Permits	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>53</b>

### 3.3.2 Agency Comments Summary

The following is a summarized list of agency comments by topic.

#### **General**

##### **Existing Environment**

- There are 37 train movements per day at speeds up to 79 mph.

##### **Environmental Document**

- The lead agency must adhere to CEQA guidelines when preparing the EIR.
- The cumulative impact analysis may indicate significant degradation of sensitive resources.
- Goods movement needs in the area will need to be addressed.

#### **Purpose and Need**

##### **General**

- Request to know why this project was chosen and want to have sufficient time to comment on all documents for the project.
- The project needs a more focused and specific Purpose and Need Statement.
- Coordination with rail and high speed rail (HSR) interests will be needed.
- Need to address the economic downturn and how this is affecting goods movement in the area and at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

#### **Alternatives**

##### **General**

- Need to justify alignment variations A, B, and C.
- A greater focus toward goods movement should be addressed.
- The proposed alignment crosses an LADWP transmission line right-of-way and may be subject to temporary disruption caused by LADWP operations.

##### **Design Features**

- More detailed maps are needed before any alternatives are chosen.
- Caltrans should meet with appropriate agencies to discuss utilities and rail crossings.

- Design features should seek to avoid hydrological impacts.
- Various aspects of the project will be subject to review and approval by LADWP. Close coordination will be required to avoid conflicts and ensure that agency requirements are met.

#### **No Build**

- There should be more discussion and evaluation of the No-Build alternative.

#### **TSM/TDM**

- The description of TSM/TDM in documents should include signal coordination of arterial routes and the existing SR-18.
- Need to look at feasibility of implementing TSM/TDM alternatives simultaneously with other build alternatives.

#### **High Speed Rail**

- The master plan for this area is not conducive with Alternative 6 or 7.
- Careful consideration should be given to the impacts of HSR and they should be disclosed in the environmental document.

#### **Transit**

- Commuters in the project area should be addressed in the environmental document.

#### **Toll**

- A toll way would not accommodate local traffic and is infeasible.

### **Human Environment**

#### **Traffic**

##### **General**

- Alternative 3, variation C, would not provide access or handle the forecasted traffic volumes for the Southern California Logistics Airport (SCLA).
- Alternative 5 would not provide any congestion relief along SR-18 and Bear Valley Road, east of I-15.

#### **Community**

##### **Community Growth**

- The communities in the HDC are being pushed towards forced growth.
- The construction of the HDC may bring the problems it's trying to avoid.
- Alternative 5 runs through an urbanized area of Victorville and would cause significant development along SR-18 from US-395 to I-15; development of this kind will have negative impacts.

#### **Cultural**

##### **Historical/Archaeology**

- The lead agency must assess if there are any adverse impacts to resources within the APE and, if so, mitigate those impacts.
- Utilize the California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS) of the Office of the Historic Preservation (OHP) for archaeological data.

## **Native Americans**

- State law addresses Native American Religious Expression in the Public Resources Code.
- A search of the Sacred Lands File (SLF) determined that Native American Cultural Resources were difficult to identify due to the number and length of locations.
- Contact the tribe or tribal elder whenever a professional archaeologist is employed during the 'Initial Study' and in other phases of the environmental planning process. Early consultation will help to prevent delays.

## **Physical Environment**

### **Air Quality**

- All Alternatives will need to have an air quality discussion in the environmental document.
- The environmental document will need to discuss a Construction Emissions Mitigation Plan for the project.

### **Flooding**

- All relevant flood maps and requirements for this project need to be checked.
- The local floodplain managers should be contacted.
- There should be an analysis and discussion of flooding in the area.

### **Water and Wetlands**

- Many washes and drainages exist in the project area. The project must be consider any and all impacts to them and on-site avoidance and minimization strategies.
- Clean Water Act coordination will need to take place for this project.
- Alternatives will affect the watersheds in the project area significantly.

## **Biological Environment**

### **Wildlife/Habitat**

- The project area has wildlife that will be affected by a new transportation corridor.
- Concern about impacts to the fragile ecosystem and the building of the HDC.

### **Mitigation**

- Mitigation must be consistent with the Corps/EPA guidelines. Must recognize the difficulty of replacing any disturbed area.
- Mitigation should be done by land acquisition.

### **Permits**

- Each project alternative will need a separate review of environmental impacts

## **3.4 Key Issues**

Some general observations can be made based on the comments received from the public during the scoping process. Some key issues of concern can also be identified. These insights gained from the scoping process will be helpful as we move through the analysis of this project and develop the environmental document.

- Of those commenters expressing an opinion, the majority are favorable toward the project.
- The greatest opposition to the project is near the eastern terminus, particularly in the Town of Apple Valley.
- Within Apple Valley, there is general opposition to Variation C, which passes through a well-developed community.
- There is concern among the public regarding right-of-way acquisition and potential relocations.
- There is concern about potential impacts of the project on the Homestead Valley and Johnson Valley communities east of Apple Valley.
- There is concern over the potential use of tolls and their impact on truckers and the local economy.
- There is concern over the potential “quality of life” impacts, particularly near the eastern end of the corridor.

#### **4. FUTURE OUTREACH EFFORTS**

Caltrans and its partner agencies will continue with their outreach efforts in an attempt to fully engage the public and agencies in the development of this project. Pursuant to SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, a Coordination Plan has been developed to guide coordination efforts between Caltrans and the numerous agencies (Participating and Cooperating Agencies) that have an interest in the project. Initial meetings to discuss the project Purpose and Need, Alternatives, and various agency concerns are expected to be held during February 2011.

In addition, Metro has recently hired a special consultant team to spearhead future community outreach efforts. This team is preparing a Community Participation Plan that will guide efforts to engage and solicit input from the public throughout the EIR/EIS development process. It is anticipated that the first of a series of community meetings will be held in early 2011.

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