

Public Involvement Plan

Redlands Passenger Rail Project

EIS/EIR



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Federal Transit Administration, Region 9

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Early and continuing coordination with the general public and appropriate public agencies is an essential part of the environmental process. Coordination with stakeholders is necessary to determine the necessary scope of environmental documentation as well as the level of analysis required and to evaluate potential effects and identify appropriate mitigation measures. This Public Involvement Plan outlines the methods and procedures that the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), as the local project sponsor, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will implement to maximize opportunities for the public to become informed about the Redlands Passenger Rail Project (RPRP or proposed Project) and provide comments and concerns. Public participation for RPRP will be accomplished through a variety of formal and information outreach methods, including various forms of public noticing.

2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOALS

The goals of the public participation plan are to:

- Conduct a public outreach effort that is open, honest and transparent with all stakeholders throughout the various phases of the environmental review process
- Accurately document public input and meet all National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements
- Identify and address public interests and issues to help shape and refine project alternatives
- Provide multiple, convenient ways for interested parties to provide comments
- Engage a broad, representative cross section of the public to help ensure the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/ Environmental Impact Report (EIR) reflects and incorporates agency and public input
- Increase project awareness among stakeholders, especially those directly impacted by the project

3.0 AUDIENCES

An important step of this Public Involvement Plan is to identify target audiences. With the Project study area spanning the cities of San Bernardino and Redlands, it is important to communicate with organizations, entities, and key stakeholders that are representative of each community. Additionally, with state and federal implications as it relates to permitting and approvals, target audiences will need to reflect the appropriate agencies/entities. The following is a list of target audiences by sector:

- Businesses/Institutions
 - Priority: Directly impacted/affected (e.g. ESRI; University of Redlands; Businesses affected by right-of-way temporary construction easements, and partial and full property takes)
 - General: within cities of Redlands and San Bernardino – Downtown Redlands, Downtown San Bernardino, San Bernardino International Airport, Inland Valley

Development Agency, Citrus Plaza, University/College Satellite Campuses off of Hospitality Lane near Waterman Avenue; Hospitality Lane Business Corridor

- Residents/Community Organizations
 - Redlands, San Bernardino, Loma Linda
 - Prominent community members/opinion leaders
 - Service organizations, neighborhood organizations/associations
 - Faith-based entities
 - Redlands Unified School District; San Bernardino City Unified School District

- Elected Officials – City, County, State, Federal
 - Redlands and San Bernardino city councils, leadership, key department officials (public works, planning, emergency responders, etc)
 - County Supervisors Josie Gonzales and Neil Derry
 - State Senators Gloria Negrete McLeod and Bob Dutton
 - State Assemblymembers Wilmer Amina Carter and Mike Morrell
 - U.S. Congressman Joe Baca and Jerry Lewis
 - U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein

- Agencies and Project Coordination
 - San Bernardino County Flood Control District
 - Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
 - Metrolink/Southern California Regional Rail Authority
 - Caltrans
 - Omnitans
 - California Public Utilities Commission
 - FTA
 - SANBAG
 - Southern California Associated Governments
 - South Coast Air Quality Management District
 - Federal Railroad Administration
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency

- Local Media
 - Dailies: Redlands Daily Facts, San Bernardino Sun, Press-Enterprise
 - Weeklies: Inland Empire Community Newspapers, La Prensa
 - Broadcast: KVCR TV & Radio, Inland News Today, Inland Empire Media Group
 - SANBAG Website

4.0 APPROACH

The overall approach is to inform and update the public throughout the environmental review process. Public and agency outreach will be conducted in a manner that meets the requirements of CEQA and NEPA with specific emphasis on FTA’s implementing guidelines. This includes:

- Publishing and advertising the notice of the intent (NOI) and notice of preparation (NOP) of the lead agencies' plans to prepare an environmental document
- Establishment of a public comment period for scoping, including the facilitation of public scoping meetings
- Publishing a notice of availability (NOA) of the draft environmental document
- Establishment of a public comment period for the draft document, including public meetings
- Provisions to make responses to public and agency comments available for review
- Public hearing for certification of the document
- Preparation of a notice of determination (NOD) under CEQA by SANBAG and record of decision under NEPA by FTA

5.0 ACTIVITIES

Notice of Preparation

In accordance with Section 15063 of the CEQA Guidelines, a NOP was prepared and distributed to the State Clearinghouse (SCH), responsible and trustee agencies, as well as private organizations and individuals that may have an interest in the Project. The 30-day public comment period for the NOP began on April 10, 2012, and ended on May 12, 2012. The NOP was posted with the San Bernardino County Clerk's office and SCH at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to officially solicit statewide agency comments on the scope of the environmental document. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that SANBAG, as the lead agency under CEQA, planned to prepare an EIR for the Project.

Notice of Intent

Early in 2012, FTA and SANBAG began preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) and EIR for the RPRP and conducted two scoping meetings; one on April 24 in the City of Redlands and the other on May 2 in the City of San Bernardino. Based on the input received by community, including the provision of written comment letters, and preliminary findings from ongoing technical studies, FTA determined that an EIS is required. In accordance with NEPA regulations, a NOI will be prepared to provide notice that an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared and considered by FTA. The purpose of the NOI is to describe the proposed action, possible alternatives, and lead agency's proposed scoping process. The NOI was published in the Federal Register on July 31, 2012, triggering the start of the 30-day public review period (July 31, 2012 to September 25, 2012) and, in parallel, advertised in local media.

Coordination Plan

Consistent with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), FTA and SANBAG, as the lead agencies, will be responsible for identifying, extending an invitation, and involving as early as practicable Federal and non-Federal agencies and Indian tribes that may have an interest in the Project. The lead agencies

must invite such agencies to become cooperating or participating agencies in the NEPA environmental review process. The lead agencies are responsible for developing a coordination plan and providing opportunities for cooperating and participating agencies to be involved. As part of FTA and SANBAG’s efforts to prepare a joint EIS/EIR, the lead agencies will prepare an Agency Coordination Plan to guide agency involvement in decision-making related to the completion of the NEPA environmental review process.

Stakeholder and Community Outreach

As a first step prior to scoping, SANBAG identified and met with a mix of agency, local community, environmental and other stakeholders during the course of 2011 for early input on issues and interests to consider and preferred ways of informing and involving them throughout the Project. This process led to the compilation of a list of interested parties to be included in future public noticing. Moving forward, SANBAG will be engaging these representatives and groups through the following means:

- Presentations and updates at standing meetings/bodies
- Small group meetings on specific topics of interest
- Newsletters and media outreach

Scoping Meetings

As part of the community outreach for the Project, scoping meetings will be held to provide the public the opportunity to comment on the project purpose and need, the alternatives to be considered, and issues and areas of concern to be considered in the EIS/EIR. To date, scoping meetings were held in Redlands and San Bernardino on April 24 and May 2, 2012, respectively. Two additional scoping meetings will be held on August 14 and August 15, 2012. The locations and dates of the scoping meetings are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: RPRP Scoping Meetings

Location	Date and Time	Notice Type
ESRI Café 380 New York Street Redlands, CA 92373	Tuesday, April 24, 2012 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	NOP
San Bernardino Hilton, University Room 285 East Hospitality Lane San Bernardino, CA 92408	Wednesday, May 2, 2012 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.	NOP
ESRI Café 380 New York Street Redlands, CA 92373	Tuesday, August 14, 2012 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.	NOI
San Bernardino Hilton, University Room 285 East Hospitality Lane San Bernardino, CA 92408	Wednesday, August 15, 2012 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.	NOI

The scoping meetings will be conducted in the following format:

- Introduction: 10-15 minutes
- Presentation and Project Overview: 30 minutes
- Public Comment and Open Forum: 45 minutes

The meetings will start with a brief introduction of SANBAG's representatives for the Project and its consultant team. As part of the introduction, SANBAG will provide a brief overview of the goals and objectives for the meeting along with the format of the meeting.

Following the introductions, a PowerPoint presentation will be utilized to provide a general overview of the Project. The presentation will provide information regarding the purpose of scoping and information on the Project's purpose and need, background, and the alternatives being carried forward for consideration in the EIS/EIR.

An open forum comment period will follow the presentation which will provide attendees the opportunity to state their comments. This will include an opportunity for the public to have the comments transcribed. A language interpreter will be present during the public meeting to assist any non-English speaking community members. This portion of the scoping meeting will be utilized to hear the community's comments and concerns on the Project. Comment cards will be provided to allow the public to note any questions or concerns. Following the open forum comment period, the meeting will transition into an open house forum to provide attendees with an opportunity to review project information and to ask project team members with questions. Five members of the Project team will be oriented at different locations in the room to provide information on particular aspects of the Project (i.e., engineering, environmental, grade crossings). Project information will be provided on large-sized display boards. The display boards will depict the general location of the Project as well as the locations of proposed track improvements, platforms, bridges, layover facilities, and grade crossings.

Prior to the public meetings, information regarding the opportunity for public comments on the Project will be made available through a variety of sources, including display advertisements, certified mail, email blasts, and information flier distribution.

Advertisements

Display advertisements for the scoping meetings will be placed in newspapers within the Project area, selected based on geographic focus and language needs. Newspaper advertisements will be strategically placed in local newspapers to reach out to the population residing and/or working along the nine-mile entire nine-mile stretch of the Project area. To date, scoping meetings were advertised in the *San Bernardino Sun*, *Redlands Daily Facts*, and *Inland Empire Community Newspapers*. These newspapers target the following audience: San Bernardino County, City of

Redlands, communities in Loma Linda, Highland, Rialto, and Colton, and Spanish-speakers. A list of newspapers and advertisement publication dates is provided in Table 2.

Table 2: RPRP Scoping Period Display Advertising

Newspaper(s)	Publication Date	Notice Type
<i>San Bernardino Sun, Redlands Daily Facts, and Inland Empire Community Newspapers</i>	April 12, 2012	NOP
<i>San Bernardino Sun, Redlands Daily Facts, and Inland Empire Community Newspapers</i>	July 31 , 2012	NOI

Agency Mailings

To support FTA’s outreach and scoping requirements, an agency mailing list was developed to ensure early notification is provided to applicable federal, state, and local agencies who would not otherwise receive formal notification from the State Clearinghouse. This will be used to distribute meeting and milestones notices such as the release of the NOP, NOI, scoping meetings, release of the draft EIS/EIR and associated public hearings. To date, the outreach team has developed a targeted list of approximately 100 agency/key stakeholder contacts to receive a mailing of the NOP informing them of the upcoming scoping meetings and an opportunity to provide comment during the 30-day review period. These mailings were sent out on April 10, 2012. Additionally, an e-mail about the NOP was sent out electronically on April 10, 2012.

City Council Notification

Scoping meeting information was announced at the San Bernardino city council meeting on April 16, 2012. Additionally, the outreach team requested that the City of Redlands announce scoping meeting information at the April 17, 2012 city council meeting.

Mailings to Adjacent Properties

In addition to the agency mailing list, a broader mailing list was developed to include all property owners and mailing addresses for all parcels adjacent to the entire nine-mile stretch of the Project area. This will be used to distribute meeting and milestones notices such as the release of the NOP, NOI, scoping meetings, release of the draft EIS/EIR and associated public hearings. Mailing addresses were obtained from the City of San Bernardino Economic Development Agency. To date, approximately 400 NOPs were mailed out to property owners on April 11 and 12, 2012. A similar number of NOIs were mailed out on July 31, 2012.

Informational Flier Distribution

The outreach team strategically distributed approximately 200 information fliers near proposed platform locations in the cities of San Bernardino and Redlands.

Database Notification

The database will be used to distribute meeting and milestones notices such as the release of the NOP, NOI, scoping meetings, release of the draft EIS/EIR and associated public hearings. To date, notification of the NOP and scoping meeting information was sent to approximately 900 contacts in the project database. First round notification emails were sent on April 18, 2012, followed by reminder emails on April 23, 2012 and May 1, 2012.

A second round of emails was sent in conjunction with the NOI that was issued on July 31, 2012. This email notification was sent to the same database contacts. Reminder emails were then sent on August 13 and August 14, 2012 to notify database contacts about the NOI and scoping meetings.

Other Channels of Communication Used to Notify the Public

In addition to the NOP filed with the State Clearinghouse, the following are other activities implemented to inform the public:

- NOP made available on the SANBAG website (<http://sanbag.ca.gov/projects/redlands-transit.html>) on April 10, 2012 throughout the 30-day review period.
- Notification of scoping meetings sent to SANBAG board of directors and announced at SANBAG board meeting.
- Notification of scoping meeting at ESRI sent to all ESRI employees via email on behalf of the company encouraging attendance.
- Downtown San Bernardino Constant Contact database notification to approximately 400 local business leaders, residents, elected and community-based organizations.
- Pre-meeting media outreach to get information covered in local newspapers. Resulted in coverage in April 17, 2012 edition of the *Redlands Daily Facts*.
- PowerPoint presentation used at meetings was made available to the public on the SANBAG website on April 25, 2012 – providing people unable to attend the meeting an opportunity to see the information presented.
- Publication of the NOI in the Federal Register on July 31, 2012.
- NOI will be made available on the SANBAG website

Media Outreach

Notice of milestone meetings and events will be provided to local and regional media. To date, proactive and targeted media outreach resulted in coverage of the meetings and project.

- April 17, 2012 – The San Bernardino Sun and Redlands Daily Facts
 - Description: Pre-notification of meetings at ESRI on April 24 and in San Bernardino on May 2, 2012.
- April 25, 2012 – The San Bernardino Sun and Redlands Daily Facts
 - Description: Recap of meeting held at ESRI.

- April 26, 2012 – Metro’s Los Angeles Transportation Headlines
 - Description: Link to Redlands Daily Facts article on coverage of April 24 meeting.
- May 6, 2012 – Redlands-Loma Linda Patch
 - Description: Recap of the meeting held in San Bernardino.

Additional targeted outreach will occur in conjunction with the release of the NOI in the months of July and August 2012.