

## 5.0 COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

### 5.1 SCOPING PROCESS

FRA initiated the scoping process by publishing a NOI to prepare a Program EIS/EIR in the Federal Register on August 17, 2012. FRA is the lead federal agency, working jointly with SLOCOG as the lead state agency. The two agencies have prepared this program-level (Tier 1) EIS/EIR pursuant to NEPA and CEQA guidelines.

Two scoping meetings were held as a part of the scoping process as outlined in **Table 5-1**.

Table 5-1 Scoping Meetings

Salinas	San Luis Obispo
Transportation Agency for Monterey County	San Luis Obispo City/County Library
55-B Plaza Circle	995 Palm Street
August 28, 2012, 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	August 29, 2012, 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

These meetings provided an opportunity for the public and agencies to comment on the scope of environmental topics that will be analyzed in the Program EIS/EIR.

Approximately 25 people attended the scoping meetings and/or submitted comments during the scoping period. Sign in sheets were provided for attendees with the option of including a mailing/email address so that they could be added to the project mailing list. This list will be used to update the public and appropriate agencies on further public outreach/involvement opportunities, and to provide further information concerning the proposed project. Scoping meeting attendees were provided with comment cards to submit their comments on the project, and copies of the presentation given were made available for interested parties.

Representatives from SLOCOG, TAMC and the consultant team presented an overview of the Coast Corridor Rail Project, its components, and its purpose and need. They also discussed the environmental process and the issues to be studied in the Program EIS/EIR. Preceding and following the presentation, attendees were welcomed to take part in an open house informal discussion of the project and

review process with team members at various information stations with exhibit boards and aerial overview maps.

## 5.2 OTHER SCOPING MEETING NOTIFICATION

### Federal Register/Notice of Intent

FRA published a notice of intent in the Federal Register on August 17, 2012.

### Newspaper

Notices to the public briefly describing the proposed project and listing the dates and locations of the scoping meetings were published in local newspapers. These publications included the *Salinas Californian* (August 21, 2012), the *San Luis Obispo Tribune* (August 22, 2012) and *El Sol* (August 25, 2012). *El Sol* is a Spanish-language newspaper published in Salinas that covers Salinas and Monterey County.

### Mailing

Over 6,000 postcard meeting notifications in both English and Spanish were distributed to residents within 500 feet of the corridor and 1,000 feet of the proposed new railroad stations (Soledad and King City). These mailers gave a brief explanation of the project and provided details on the dates, times, and locations of the Scoping Meetings.

## 5.3 FORMAL COMMENT SUMMARY

Scoping Meeting attendees were provided with comment sheets at the meeting and were asked to submit them that day or mail them to SLOCOG (1114 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401) or via email to [coastcorridorscopingcomments@circlepoint.com](mailto:coastcorridorscopingcomments@circlepoint.com) by close of business September 10, 2012. All comments and questions, including those delivered orally at one of the scoping meetings and those provided in writing, are summarized and responded to below (**Tables 5-2 and 5-3**).

Table 5-2 August 28<sup>th</sup> - Salinas

Questions/Comments	Disposition Response
Is this a real project? Has funding been identified?	Project attributes and anticipated potential funding strategies will be discussed in the EIS/EIR - see discussion of Build Alternative, Chapter 2.0, Alternatives
Does the Federal government have some minimum level of projects that need to be approved?	The EIS/EIR will discuss all pertinent regulatory requirements. There is no minimum level of improvements that must be implemented.
How much will the ticket be from Salinas to San Francisco? San Francisco to Los Angeles?	Estimated fare information was not available as of the drafting of this EIS/EIR.

Table 5-3 August 29<sup>th</sup> - San Luis Obispo

Questions/Comments	Disposition Response
Would you consider re-instituting the use of sidings—currently many are used for excess rail car storage. This is unsightly, and being used as a parking lot.	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all project components and how they were developed.
Besides the Cuesta Grade, what other curves are we looking at?	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all project components and how they were developed. Several other curve corrections are noted; the Cuesta area is the only segment where substantial second track is programmed.
Do we have the authority to take property via eminent domain?	The EIS/EIR will discuss the subsequent analyses and permits anticipated to be necessary for project implementation, including any needed land acquisition. As described in Chapter 2.0, Alternatives, the extent of actual improvements to be implemented is not yet known, so the need for any specific property acquisition has not yet been determined.
Will the fiber optic cable that was laid a number of years ago be considered or disturbed?	The EIS/EIR will consider effects to existing utilities in the rail corridor, including communications infrastructure. See Section 3.8, Public Utilities and Services
Is the April 2015 service date firm?	The EIS/EIR will clarify anticipated project timeframes. The final EIS/EIR is likely to be published in early 2015. Updated projections on service dates will be provided as feasible.

Questions/Comments	Disposition Response
What is the status of implementing positive train control? Will it be required?	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all of the anticipated improvements.
What website will you use to provide updates?	<a href="http://www.slocog.org">www.slocog.org</a>
Does the train own an easement next to the tracks?	The EIS/EIR will discuss the subsequent analyses and permits anticipated to be necessary for project implementation, including any needed land acquisition.
I would like to see a parallel bike path and trail.	The comment is noted.
Amtrak & UPRR—since UPRR is such a disinterested partner, why force the issue? Highway 101 has a good amount of Right of Way for an elevated train up the middle of the highway.	The Alternatives section of the EIS/EIR will describe all of the anticipated improvements and their anticipated locations. This section will also discuss alternatives briefly considered but ultimately rejected from further analysis.
There is much to accomplish in terms of planning and actual work on the Coast Corridor. Eagerly awaiting the start of the Coast Daylight.	The comment is noted.
Pleased to see that much needed improvements will be made. These will serve residents and tourists.	The comment is noted.
This project is much needed, and adding stations between SLO and Salinas would be okay, but there should be at least one daily express run up and down the coast each way that skips most other stops.	The comment is noted.

## 5.4 STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

As part of the public involvement and outreach process for the Coast Corridor Rail Project environmental review, consultants assisting SLOCOG, TAMC, and Caltrans on the project made efforts to conduct project briefings with agencies and other stakeholders prioritized by SLOCOG and its partners. Below is a summary of briefings conducted between August 2012 and November 2012. Also identified are agencies that were contacted who did not wish to receive a briefing, or did not respond to inquiries.

### **City of Soledad**

A briefing with the Community and Economic Development Director of the City of Soledad was held in-person on August 28, 2012. Discussion topics included: the City of Soledad Downtown Specific Plan, station location, potential agriculture impacts if any access across the tracks is eliminated.

### **City of King**

A briefing with the Community Development Director and staff was conducted in-person on August 29, 2012. Discussion topics included: purpose/result of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, coordination with Fort Hunter-Liggett, coordination with existing downtown planning efforts, coordination with UPRR, existing RailPro study. King City staff indicated concerns about the following topics: Greenhouse Gas emissions, multi-modal element, and the potential impact on commute patterns. King City staff also encouraged making the Draft Program EIS/EIR accessible to Spanish speakers, if feasible.

### **Monterey County Farm Bureau**

A briefing was held via teleconference and webinar with the Monterey County Farm Bureau on October 17, 2012. Discussion topics included impacts to station locations, alignments, the environmental process schedule and impacts to agricultural land. The Farm Bureau reported at the end of the briefing that this information about the project was “not as alarming” as they had expected. They look forward to continued involvement in the project moving forward.

### **U.S. Army/Fort Hunter Liggett**

A briefing was conducted via teleconference/webinar with command staff at Fort Hunter Liggett on November 13, 2012. Fort Hunter Liggett was not on the initial list of stakeholders, given its distance (20+ miles) from the corridor and the proposed King City station. However, staff at the City of King strongly urged outreach to Fort command staff. Discussion topics included train schedules and the location of the train station in San Francisco, and the potential for Coast Corridor service to connect with airports in San Jose and Burbank as a means of expanding access to and from the Fort. The stakeholders are supportive of the project and look forward to receiving project updates.

### **San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau**

Contact attempts were made to the San Luis Obispo Farm Bureau, but were not returned.

### Others Contacted but Declined Briefings

We have reached out to the following groups and found out that they were not interested in obtaining more information about the Coast Corridor Rail Project:

- Salinas Valley Chamber
- San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce
- San Luis Obispo County Agricultural Commissioner

### No Response

We also reached out to the following agencies to offer a briefing on the project, but did not receive a response:

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- United States Forest Service: Santa Lucia unit of Los Padres National Forest<sup>1</sup>

## 5.5 TRIBAL OUTREACH

The project team performed a Sacred Lands File and Native American Contacts List Request through the NAHC. On July 1, 2013, the NAHC responded to the records search, noting that the search indicated the possible presence of Native American traditional cultural place(s) in the proposed project area. As such, the NAHC recommended that tribal governments and individuals be contacted to determine potential impact of any cultural place(s), and follow up within two weeks of initial contact via telephone call. The NAHC provided contact information for 25 individuals from several tribal organizations traditionally affiliated with lands in the project area.

In response to the NAHC's request, and pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800.2(c)(2)(ii)) the lead Federal agency, FRA, reached out to the identified individuals to advise about the project.

Initial contact was made via letter, sent certified mail on September 17, 2013. As recommended by the NAHC, the project team made follow up phone calls to the tribal government contacts on September 24, 2013. All answered calls indicated receipt of FRA's letter.

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in Chapter 4, in August 2014 the consultant team preparing this document sought and obtained information from a ranger within US Forest Service regarding land uses in the vicinity of the Cuesta Grade/proposed second main line.

## 5.6 OTHER AGENCY OUTREACH

The project team has worked closely with the California State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure that all necessary outreach processes are taken to ensure the mitigation of any potential historical lands disruption.

### Agency Conference Calls and Correspondence

- Conference Call with FRA and Circlepoint, November 7, 2013
  - Delivered updated outreach efforts report per SHPO's June recommendations.
- Email Correspondence with Circlepoint: October 3, 2013
  - SHPO acknowledged receipt of 9/3/2013 FRA letter initiating Section 106 consultation.

Conference Call with Circlepoint, June 27, 2013

- Discussed the background, purpose & need, and key stakeholders of the project, as well as the Tier 1 EIS/EIR.
- Project team requested SHPO feedback on appropriate parameters for the Cultural Records search; SHPO supported ¼ mile buffer zone around project alignment as appropriate boundary for cultural resources analysis.
- SHPO expressed importance of conducting NAHC consultation as early as possible.

## 5.7 DRAFT PROGRAM EIS/EIR DISTRIBUTION LIST

All persons, agencies, and organizations listed below have been informed of the availability of and locations to obtain the Draft Program EIS/EIR, as well as the timing of the public review period. Libraries listed below have received both hardcopy and electronic copies of the Draft Program EIS/EIR document and appendices. Federal, state, and local agencies and other officials and organizations listed below have received a hard copy of the Summary and electronic copies of the document and appendices. All other people (approximately 6000 addresses along the Corridor) have been mailed a notification that includes information on how to obtain a copy of the Draft Program EIS/EIR, the timing for the public comment period, and notice on public hearing dates, times, and locations. This information was also conveyed in both English and Spanish language newspapers in the Corridor (the *Salinas Californian*, *El Sol*, and the *San Luis Obispo Tribune*).

## 5.7.1 LIBRARY LOCATIONS

### Monterey County

Salinas Public Library, 350 Lincoln Avenue, Salinas, CA 93901  
Gonzales Branch Library, 851 5th Street, Gonzales, CA 93926  
Soledad Branch Library, 401 Gabilan Drive, Soledad, CA 93960  
Greenfield Branch Library, 315 El Camino Real, Greenfield, CA 93927

### San Luis Obispo County

Paso Robles City Library, 1000 Spring Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446  
Atascadero Public Library, 6850 Morro Road, Atascadero, CA 93422  
San Luis Obispo City/County Library, 995 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

## 5.7.2 FEDERAL AGENCIES

U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Vallejo  
U.S. Department of Army, Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch, Los Angeles  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9, San Francisco & Washington, D.C.

## 5.7.3 STATE AGENCIES

California Department of Transportation, Chief Deputy Director, Sacramento  
California Department of Transportation, District 5, San Luis Obispo  
California Environmental Protection Agency, Secretary for Environmental Protection, Sacramento  
California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
California State Parks  
California State Water Resources Control Board

## 5.7.4 ELECTED OFFICIALS

### Federal Elected Officials

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator for California  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator for California  
The Honorable Sam Farr, 20th Congressional District  
The Honorable Lois Capps, 24th Congressional District

### State Elected Officials

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor  
The Honorable Bill Monning, 17th Senate District  
The Honorable Luis Alejo, 30th Assembly District  
The Honorable Katcho Achadjian, 35th Assembly District



## **County and Local Officials**

Mr. Louis Calcagno, Chair, Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Mr. Bruce Gibson, Chair, San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors

## **Mayors of Corridor Cities**

The Honorable Mayor Joe Gunter, Salinas

The Honorable Mayor John Huerta, Greenfield

The Honorable Mayor Maria Orozco, Gonzales

The Honorable Mayor Fred Ledesma, Soledad

The Honorable Mayor Robert Cullen, King City

The Honorable Mayor Duane Picanco, Paso Robles

The Honorable Mayor Tom O'Malley, Atascadero

The Honorable Mayor Jan Howell Marx, San Luis Obispo

### **5.7.5 REGIONAL AND LOCAL AGENCIES**

Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC)

Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)

Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST)

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (SLO APCD)

San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority

Coast Rail Coordinating Council

### **5.7.6 ORGANIZATIONS**

Amtrak, Public and Governmental Affairs, Oakland

Planning and Conservation League, Sacramento

Rail Passenger Association of California, San Francisco

Train Riders Association of California, Sacramento

Union Pacific Railroad, Sacramento

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