

Chapter 4
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Chapter 4

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

4.1 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT COMPLIANCE PROCEDURES

When the significance of impacts of a transportation project is uncertain, or when preliminary research and surveys reveal no significant impacts will occur as a result of the project, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared (see Figure 4-A). Preparation of an EA will result in one of the following:

1. Finding of No Significant Impact. If processing of the EA results in the determination that the project does not involve significant impacts, a “Finding of No Significant Impact” (FONSI) will be prepared as the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) decision document for the project.
2. Finding that Significant Impacts Will Occur. If, during the EA process, it is determined that the project will have significant impacts, the Environmental Services Division will coordinate the finding with the FHWA and will initiate the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (see Chapter 5).

An EA is intended to be a concise public document that serves to:

- provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an EIS or issue a FONSI,
- comply with NEPA when no EIS is necessary, and
- facilitate the preparation of an EIS, if required.

If the FHWA is not the lead Federal agency for the project, different procedures apply, based on the NEPA requirements of that agency (e.g., BLM).

The fundamentals of the NEPA process include:

- development of project purpose and need;
- development of alternatives;
- evaluation of potential environmental impacts of the alternatives under consideration;
- consideration of appropriate impact mitigation measures (e.g., avoidance minimization, compensation);
- interagency coordination;
- public involvement; and
- documentation and disclosure

Using a Section 6002 process to verify that documentation is meeting the requirements of SAFETEA-LU is optional for an EA.

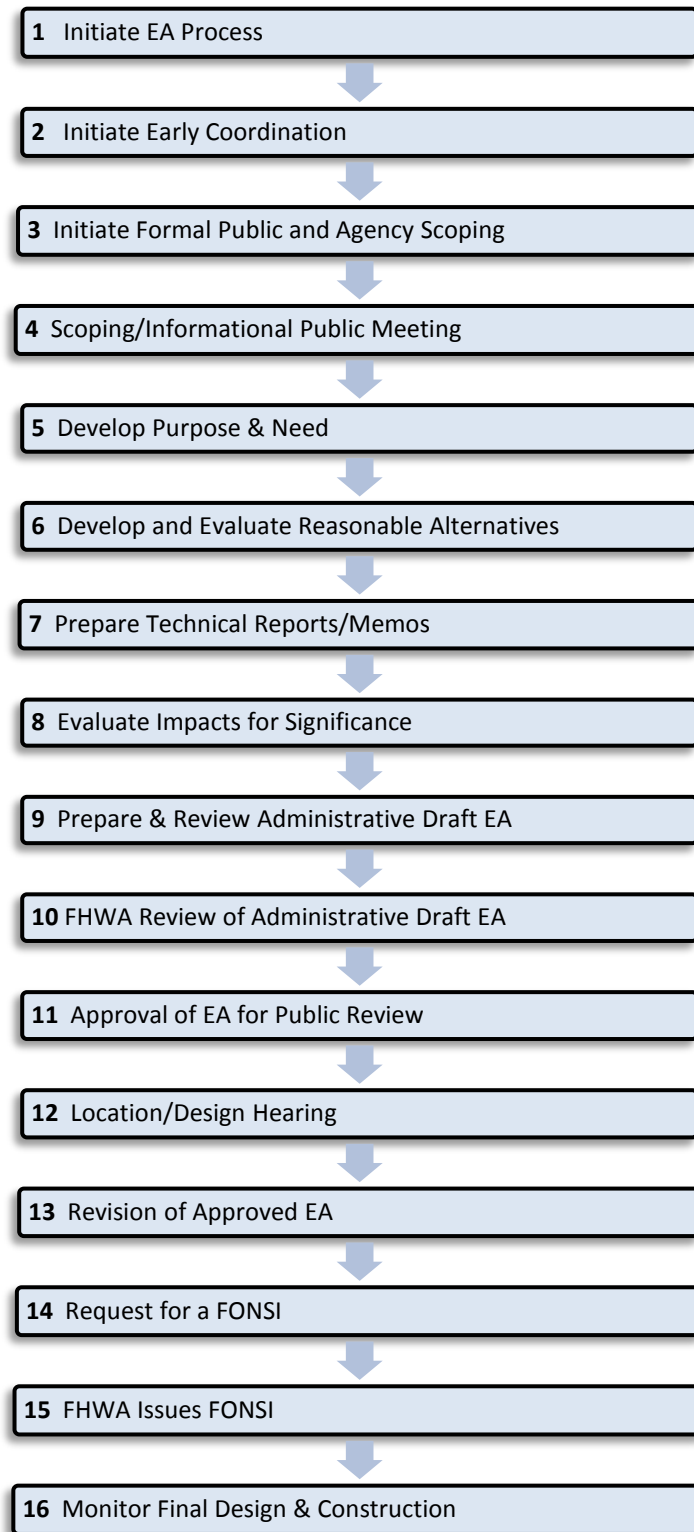


Figure 4-A — EA COMPLIANCE PROCESS

ACTIVITY NO. 1:

INITIATE EA PROCESS

After receiving concurrence from the FHWA in the decision to prepare an EA for a project, the Environmental Services Division will initiate the EA process (Figure 4-A) by compiling the pertinent information from the data gathering and field review activities that provided the basis for the preliminary determination of impacts. The information will be organized by environmental impact issue areas and will be reviewed for completeness.

The information will address the following potential impact areas, as applicable:

- access
- safety
- socio-economic considerations,
- environmental justice,
- air quality,
- traffic noise,
- hazardous materials/waste,
- floodplain and hydrologic assessment,
- water quality,
- biological resources,
- cultural resources,
- public parks, recreation areas, Section 4(f),
- cumulative and secondary impact issues,
- Native American concerns, and
- land use
- visual resources.

The Environmental Services Division will coordinate with the Project Management Team (PMT), regulatory and resource agencies and the public in evaluating and refining preliminary project alternatives based on consideration of the data gathering and field review information, and the following:

- the Purpose and Need Statement for the project,
- community and agency concerns,
- logical termini and independent utility,
- cost constraints,
- alternate modes of transportation, and
- the no-build alternative.

At this time Consultant Services may be secured by the Project Management Division, Design Division, or Environmental Services Division to facilitate development of project design, to conduct environmental studies as needed, and prepare the EA document. NDOT retains oversight over these activities and any reports, technical memos or other required documentation will be reviewed and approved by NDOT. The scope of services will determine which of the following Activities NDOT or the Consultant will perform.

Regulations and Guidance

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006

ACTIVITY NO. 2:

INITIATE EARLY COORDINATION

The PMT, including the Environmental Services Division and Consultant, will initiate early coordination with individuals, organizations and appropriate local, State and Federal agencies that have an interest in the project or have information or expertise concerning potential project issues. The purpose of this coordination will be to further develop the purpose and need for the project, assist in the preliminary development of reasonable and feasible alternatives, and begin gathering information for evaluating the social, economic and environmental impacts of the proposed project alternatives and possible mitigation measures.

The PMT will prepare Cooperating and Participating Agency letters, if needed.

Regulations and Guidance

[NDOT Public Involvement Website](#)

[23 CFR 771.111 “Early coordination, public involvement and project development”](#)

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006

ACTIVITY NO. 3:

INITIATE FORMAL PUBLIC AND AGENCY SCOPING

An Intent-to-Study Letter will be prepared and forwarded to the appropriate Native American Tribes, Federal and State agencies (including regulatory and resource agencies), local governments, Community Advisory Boards, public organizations, recognized special interest groups, adjacent property owners (in accordance with *NDOT Public Involvement Policy*) and known concerned/affected citizens that may have an interest in the proposed project. The Intent-to-Study Letter describes the preliminary concept of the project, provides details about the public information/scoping meeting(s), and solicits the submittal of comments.

A Transportation Notice will also be prepared to accompany the Intent-to-Study letter. A location map or sketch of the project area may also accompany the Intent-to-Study letter.

The Intent-to-Study Letter and Transportation Notice will include the following:

- project location,
- project description,
- list of potential impacts,
- comment period closing date,
- name and address of point of contact at NDOT, and
- the date and location of the information/scoping meeting.

Determine, based on the composition of the surrounding neighborhoods, if a Spanish language or other applicable language version of the Intent-to-Study letter and Transportation Notice are needed.

See Figure 4-B for a Sample of an Intent-to-Study Letter and Figure 4-C for a Sample Transportation Notice.


The Environmental Services Division maintains an Intent-to-Study contact list that will form the basis of the distribution of the Intent-to-Study letter. This list must be updated, changed and augmented accordingly for each project.

The Transportation Notice will provide the basis for newspaper advertisements and web advertising for the information/scoping meeting(s). Advertising shall be at a minimum in accordance with NDOT's Public Involvement Policy. Additional targeted advertising and noticing, tailored to each project, may be required.

Development of public noticing and advertising will be coordinated with the Environmental Services Division, NDOT Public Hearings Officer, and NDOT Public Information Office. For further information on NDOT's public involvement procedures, see Chapter 6.

The EA process will actively involve Federal, State and local partners in the transportation and environmental communities in an open, cooperative and collaborative process, beginning at the earliest stages and continuing through project development and construction. The following agencies typically are included in project coordination activities:

- Federal Highway Administration
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- US Forest Service
- National Park Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- US Geological Survey
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Department of Energy
- US Department of Health and Human Services
- USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Nevada Department of Administration, State Clearinghouse
- air quality districts
- cities and counties
- Native American Tribes
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Regional Transportation Commissions



BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

STATE OF NEVADA
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1263 S. Stewart Street
Carson City, Nevada 89712

RUDY MALFABON, PE, Director
In Reply Refer to:

September 1, 2016

Intent-to-Study
I-515 and Charleston Boulevard Interchange Improvements
Clark County, NV

To Whom It May Concern:

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to improve traffic operations at the Interstate 515 (I-515) interchange with Charleston Boulevard and along I-515 between Eastern Avenue and Charleston Boulevard. The proposed project will add auxiliary lanes on I-515 between the Eastern Avenue and Charleston Boulevard interchanges, reconstruct the Charleston Boulevard interchange, and widen Charleston Boulevard east of the I-515 interchange. The proposed project will increase safety and improve traffic operations for both current and future traffic needs.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), NDOT is initiating the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate and document the proposed project's potential impacts. This letter is to inform you of the current study and to solicit your input to assist the project team in further identifying the purpose and need for the project, addressing your concerns about potential impacts, and to inform the project team about potential mitigation measures to consider. Resources addressed include, but are not limited to:

- Access
- Air Quality
- Archeology
- Environmental Justice
- Geology
- Hazardous Materials
- Historic Properties
- Land Use
- Traffic Noise
- Public Parks and Recreation Areas
- Safety
- Socioeconomic Considerations
- Visual Resources
- Water Quality and Hydrology
- Wildlife

A public information meeting will be held on Thursday September 22, 2016, from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the East Las Vegas Community Center, 250 N Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89101, to provide information about the project and receive comments from public agencies and groups who have a responsibility for resources in the study area. Also invited are individuals who may be affected by the proposed project or who have an interest in the project. Please see the Transportation Notice (other side) for additional information about the meeting location and format.

Comments or questions regarding the proposed project may be submitted to Richard Splawinski, PE, Project Manager, Nevada Department of Transportation, 1263 South Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89712, RSplawinski@dot.state.nv.us. Comments or questions may also be e-mailed to info@dot.state.nv.us; please include the project name in the subject line. We appreciate receiving any comments you may have about this project by October 7, 2016.

Sincerely,

Rick Splawinski, PE, NDOT Project Manager

Figure 4-B — SAMPLE INTENT-TO-STUDY LETTER



**TRANSPORTATION NOTICE
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
FOR
I-515/CHARLESTON BOULEVARD
INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS**

PURPOSE OF MEETING: The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), invites you to attend a public information meeting to solicit input for the I-515/Charleston Boulevard Interchange project in Las Vegas. Proposed improvements include auxiliary lanes on I-515 between the Eastern Avenue and Charleston Boulevard interchanges, reconstructing the Charleston Boulevard interchange, and widening Charleston Boulevard east of the I-515 interchange.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), NDOT is initiating the preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate and document the proposed project's potential environmental impacts.

PROJECT BENEFITS: The purpose of the proposed improvements is to increase safety and improve traffic operations for both current and future traffic needs.

WHEN AND WHERE: Thursday, September 22, 2016, 4 – 7 p.m., **PRESENTATION AT 5:30 p.m.** East Las Vegas Community Center, Ballroom, Las Vegas, NV. 250 N Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas.

WHERE YOU COME IN: Members of the public are encouraged to attend at their convenience any time during the meeting hours of 4 to 7 p.m. Project representatives will be on hand to discuss and answer your questions. There will be a brief project presentation at 5:30 p.m., followed by a short question and answer period from the audience. Before and after the presentation, the meeting will be conducted as an open-house format to provide an opportunity to view displays and individually discuss the interchange with project representatives. At the meeting, your comments may be submitted for public record in writing or verbally to a court reporter, who will be available throughout the meeting. In addition to any comments received at the meeting, written or email comments will be accepted through Friday, October 7, 2016. Please email your comments to: info@dot.state.nv.us with a reference to this project in the subject line. You may also mail your comments using the contact information below.

IF RIGHT-OF-WAY IS NEEDED: The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 will govern the acquisition of right-of-way that may be necessary for this project. More detailed information regarding right-of-way can be obtained from the NDOT's Right of Way Division, 1263 S. Stewart St., Carson City, NV 89712, or by calling (775) 888-7480.

CONTACT: Website: www.nevadadot.com
Mail: Rick Splawinski, PE, Project Manager, 1263 South Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89712,
email: RSplawinski@dot.state.nv.us.

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION REQUESTS: Reasonable efforts will be made to assist and accommodate persons with disabilities desiring to attend the meeting. Requests for auxiliary aids or services to assist individuals with disabilities or limited English proficiency should be made with as much advance notice as possible to Julie Maxey, NDOT Public Hearings Officer at 775-888-7171 or email at jmaxey@dot.state.nv.us.

Figure 4-C — SAMPLE INFORMATION MEETING TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

Regulations and Guidance

[NRS 408.245](#), [23 USC 109\(h\)](#) & [128](#), [23 CFR 771](#), [23C FR 774.5\(a\)](#), [23 USC 139\(g\)\(2\)\(A\)](#), & [40 CFR 1500-1508](#)

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006
[NDOT Public Involvement Website](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 4:

SCOPING/INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC MEETING

The Environmental Services Division, in cooperation with the FHWA Division Office and other NDOT Divisions, will hold an Information/Scoping Meeting to inform the public of the project and elicit their input. Information presented at the meeting will include items such as:

- project location,
- project description,
- purpose and need for the project,
- preliminary concepts or alternatives, and
- tentative project schedule

The meeting will be an open-house style meeting and include display boards, a formal presentation, and a short question and answer period following the formal presentation. Additionally, a handout packet will be prepared for each person in attendance. The handout will include a welcome letter, a copy of the presentation, copies of each display board, and a comment form.

Determine, based on the composition of the surrounding neighborhoods, if a Spanish language or other applicable language version of the meeting handout or presentation is needed and if a translator should attend the meeting.

See Figure 4-D for an example of a Scoping Meeting welcome letter. See Chapter 6 for additional information on NDOT public involvement procedures.

The complexity of the project or the resources in the project area may require additional scoping or information meetings.

Regulations and Guidance

[NDOT Public Involvement Website](#)

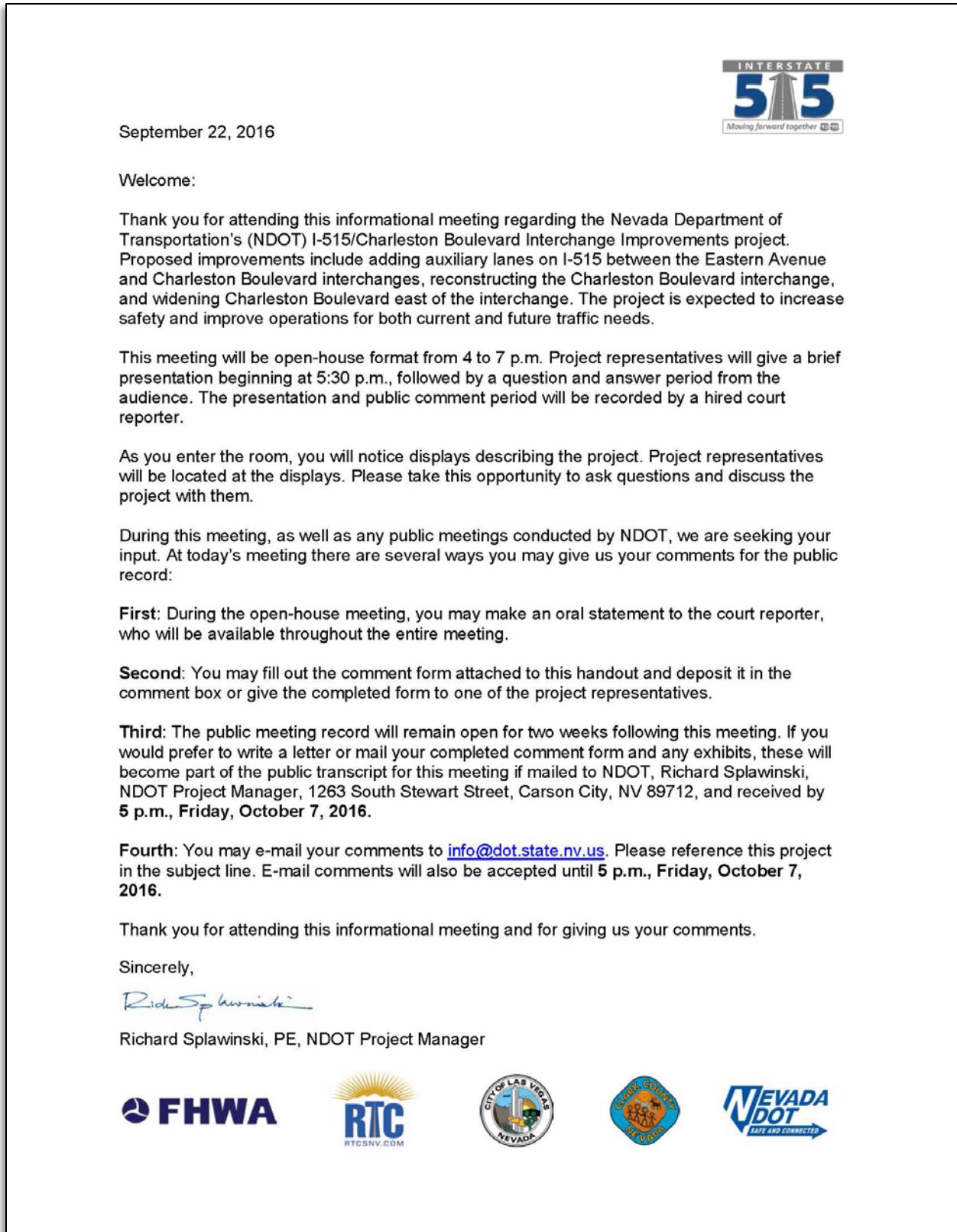


Figure 4-D — SAMPLE WELCOME LETTER

ACTIVITY NO. 5:

DEVELOP PURPOSE AND NEED

The Purpose and Need section in the environmental document will clearly and succinctly discuss why the project is being proposed. It will provide a specific, clear and justifiable explanation of Purpose and Need and will be presented in a format that enables readers to understand technical information (e.g., structural condition, traffic safety, congestion data).

The FHWA guidance provides examples of considerations that may determine or affect a project's purpose and need. The Environmental Services Division will coordinate with the FHWA Division Office, NDOT Divisions, project stakeholders and the public in defining the purpose and need for each project and will document the determination in the project file.

The Environmental Services Division will notify the FHWA Division Office of the proposed project (e.g., type of work, termini, length, general location) and cooperatively identify regulatory and resource agencies that will be invited to participate as part of the environmental review process. Regulatory and resource agencies and the public will be afforded the opportunity to provide input regarding the project purpose and need (see Activity 4).

Development of the Purpose and Need may incorporate directly or by reference feasibility studies, corridor studies or other planning studies meeting the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) requirements set forth by FHWA.

Regulations and Guidance

[FHWA Environmental Guidebook](#)

[FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A](#) – October 1987

AASHTO SCOE [Synthesis of Data Needs for EA and EIS Documentation -- A Blueprint for NEPA Document Content](#)—January 2005

AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook 07 [Defining the Purpose and Need and Determining the Range of Alternatives for Transportation Projects](#) – August 2016

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006

[Environment and Planning Linkage Processes Legal Guide](#)—February 2005

[Appendix A to Part 450 -- Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA Processes](#)

[Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act \(MAP-21\)](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 6:

DEVELOP AND EVALUATE REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES

The appropriate NDOT Divisions and project consultants will coordinate with the Environmental Services Division to develop each project's design concept, scope, and a full range of preliminary alternatives. This will include:

- making a preliminary determination of the project scope of work, including, mode (e.g., highway, provisions for high occupancy vehicles, light rail, commuter rail, combination of modes); termini, approximate length, general alignment and geometrics;
- reviewing available data and records;
- conducting an initial evaluation of right-of-way, utility and environmental impacts;
- developing a rough, preliminary cost estimate;
- determining a proposed schedule;
- developing a set of review plans; and
- affording an opportunity for regulatory and resource agencies and the public to provide input on the full range of alternatives (see Activity 4).

This preliminary list will be refined further to reduce the number of alternatives to those that avoid and minimize adverse impacts as required (e.g., wetlands, floodplains, Section 4(f) properties, historic sites) and best satisfy the project purpose and need.

The determination of the reasonable alternatives is an evolutionary process that includes the following steps:

- perform a rough evaluation of the potential impacts of each of the preliminary alternatives,
- incorporate input from agencies and the public;
- estimate the overall reasonableness and feasibility of each alternative;
- ensure that each reasonable alternative was developed to best address the project purpose and need;
- identify the reasonable alternatives, including the “no-build” alternative to be studied in detail in the EA; and
- document in the project file the reason or reasons why an alternative has been eliminated.

Development of alternatives may build off feasibility studies, corridor studies, or other planning studies meeting the PEL requirements set forth by FHWA.

At least one Build Alternative and the “No-build” alternative will be addressed in the EA. Reasonable alternatives that were dismissed will be documented in the EA, with an explanation of the reasons why they were eliminated.

Regulations and Guidance

[23 CFR 771.111\(f\) “Early coordination, public involvement and project development”](#)

[40 CFR 1502.14 “Alternatives Including the Proposed Action”](#)

AASHTO Practitioner’s Handbook 07 [Defining the Purpose and Need and Determining the Range of Alternatives for Transportation Projects](#) – August 2016

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006

[Environment and Planning Linkage Processes Legal Guide](#) – February 2005

[Appendix A to Part 450 -- Linking the Transportation Planning and NEPA Processes](#)

[Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act \(MAP-21\)](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 7:

PREPARE TECHNICAL REPORTS/MEMOS

For each reasonable alternative selected for study in the EA, the Environmental Services Division, in cooperation with the PMT, will conduct in-depth analyses to more clearly define potential environmental and other impacts of each alternative. This effort will involve gathering detailed information and data for each alternative. Various types of data (e.g., social, economic, environmental, engineering) typically will be gathered simultaneously.

The Environmental Services Division or its Consultants will conduct field investigations of proposed alternatives to confirm or update resource information and to verify or further evaluate the location, nature and limits of resources in the project area and the extent of potential resource involvement.

The Environmental Services Division or its Consultants will document the results of the field reviews, coordinate with appropriate resource agencies for review and comment on the field review data, and make the information available to other members of the PMT. Environmental Services Division shall review any reports, technical memos or other required documentation prepared by Consultants.

The technical analyses may include any or all of the following:

- [capacity analysis](#) (include safety and Critical Crash Rate calculations);
- [intersection design studies](#);
- [interchange type and design studies](#);
- [Section 106 compliance issues](#);
- [Section 4\(f\)](#) compliance issues;
- socio-economic and [Environmental Justice](#) impacts;
- [wetlands/Waters of the US involvement/impacts](#) (conducted in coordination with NDOT Stormwater Division);
- [stormwater management](#) (conducted in coordination with NDOT Stormwater Division);
- [floodplain and hydrology assessment](#);
- [threatened or endangered species impacts](#) (Section 7 - Biological Assessment & Opinion);
- [Native American issues](#);
- [Migratory Bird Treaty Act compliance issues](#);
- [invasive species/noxious weeds issues](#);
- material sites;
- [air quality impacts](#);
- [noise impacts](#);
- hazardous materials/waste involvement;
- staging areas;
- utility corridors;
- construction easements; and
- other issues, as applicable (e.g., Section 6(f), impaired waters/TMDLs, Wild and Scenic Rivers, temporary work in waterways discharge permit, farmland protection).

Technical Reports and/or preliminary compliance documentation to provide details on the specific environmental issues and impacts involved shall be prepared. The Technical Reports and/or preliminary compliance documentation will address requirements for resource avoidance and

impact minimization and mitigation. The Environmental Services Division will coordinate the Technical Reports and compliance documentation with appropriate regulatory and resource agencies and will document the results of the coordination so they may be summarized in the EA.

For detailed information on the environmental studies that may be required, see Chapters 7- 16 of this Manual.

Technical Report Submittals:

- All Technical Reports must be submitted and approved by NDOT prior to inclusion in any environmental document.
- Traffic Noise and Air Quality Technical Reports must use data which has been approved by NDOT Traffic Information and Operations Divisions.
- Biological Assessment must be provided for review by NDOT Environmental Scientist prior to finalization.
- Biological Assessments will be submitted directly from NDOT to FHWA.
- FHWA will submit Biological Assessments directly to USFWS for Biological Opinion.

Regulations and Guidance

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006

ACTIVITY NO. 8:

EVALUATE IMPACTS FOR SIGNIFICANCE

The Environmental Services Division, in cooperation with members of the PMT and the FHWA, will monitor the individual resource assessments prepared in Activity 7 to determine if the project might have a significant impact under NEPA. The determination of a significant impact is a function of both context and intensity and will vary with the setting of the proposed project and the surrounding area (e.g., residential, industrial, commercial, natural sites). The following applies:

1. Context. This means that the significance of a proposed project will be analyzed in several contexts (e.g., society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality). Both short- and long-term effects are relevant.
2. Intensity. This refers to the severity of an impact. The following will be considered in evaluating intensity:
 - impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the lead agency believes that the effect is beneficial;
 - the degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety;
 - unique characteristics of the geographic area (e.g., wetlands, ecologically critical areas);
 - the degree to which the effects on the human environment are or are likely to be, highly controversial, highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks;
 - the degree to which the project may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects;

- whether the project is related to other projects with similar impacts that become cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small components parts;
- the degree to which the project may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources;
- the degree to which the project may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the *Endangered Species Act of 1973*; and/or
- whether the project threatens a violation of Federal, State or local law imposed for the protection of the environment.

Regulations and Guidance

[40 CFR 1508.27](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 9:

PREPARE AND REVIEW ADMINISTRATIVE DRAFT EA

The following will be used to prepare an Administrative Draft EA (and draft Section 4(f) evaluation, if applicable):

- preliminary engineering information,
- the environmental Technical Reports and preliminary compliance documentation, and
- the results of coordination with regulatory and resource agencies and the public.

The Administrative Draft EA will include the following components:

- cover;
- title/approval page;
- table of contents;
- glossary of acronyms and abbreviations;
- summary of mitigation measures, including responsible parties;
- description of proposed project, including project location map and typical section;
- description of project purpose and need;
- description of alternatives eliminated and why;
- description of alternatives, including an indication of the preferred alternative, as appropriate;
- description of environmental impacts including indirect and cumulative impacts, and mitigation for all studied alternatives;
- Section 4(f) Evaluation, if applicable;
- results of agency coordination and public involvement; and
- appendices.

The Environmental Services Division will review the Administrative Draft EA and distribute it to the following NDOT Divisions for review and comment: Stormwater, Traffic Operations, Traffic Information, Roadway Design, Right-of-Way, Transportation and Multimodal Planning, Construction, and the District Engineer. Necessary changes to respond to comments received as a result of the internal NDOT review will be incorporated into the EA.

Regulations and Guidance

[FHWA Environmental Guidebook](#)

[FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A](#) – October 1987

AASHTO SCOE [Synthesis of Data Needs for EA and EIS Documentation -- A Blueprint for NEPA Document Content](#)—January 2005

ACTIVITY NO. 10:

FHWA REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE DRAFT EA

The revised Administrative Draft EA will be submitted to the FHWA Division Office for review and comment (this review may occur concurrently with NDOT's Administrative Draft review if agreed to in advance by FHWA).

Review of the Draft EA by NEPA Cooperating Agencies will occur concurrently with FHWA's review.

Necessary changes to respond to comments received as a result of the Administrative Draft EA review will be incorporated into the EA.



ACTIVITY NO. 11:

APPROVAL OF EA FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

The Chief of the Environmental Services Division, FHWA Project Engineer and the Division Office Environmental Program Manager will approve and sign the EA for public review. Once approved, a Transportation Notice will be prepared noticing the availability of the EA for public review and the date of the Location/Design Hearing (see Figure 4-E). The Transportation Notice will announce the Location/Design Hearing and where and how the EA may be obtained and reviewed.

Hard copies of the EA will be made available for public inspection at NDOT headquarters, at the appropriate NDOT District Office, the FHWA Division Office, and at public libraries in the vicinity of the project.

At a minimum the EA will be available for review and downloading on the internet via NDOT's website. The Transportation Notice will be forwarded via email or US Postal Service to the Intent-to-Study List recipients and any additional parties who have since indicated their desire to be informed of the project. Requests for electronic (CD) or hard copies of the EA will be accommodated within reason.

**NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
LOCATION/DESIGN HEARING
FOR
USA PARKWAY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the Bureau of Land Management, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) addressing the potential environmental impacts for proposed improvements to USA Parkway (SR 439).

The proposed project is located between I-80 and US 50 and may include minor improvements to the existing 6 miles of USA Parkway and would construct 12.5 miles of new road connecting to US 50 at Opal Avenue in Silver Springs, Nevada. The project is proposed to improve local and regional access and mobility between I-80 and US 50, as well as provide transportation infrastructure to support existing and future planned land uses and economic development in Storey and Lyon counties.

The EA is available on NDOT's website at www.nevadadot.com/Meetings. Copies are also available by request from NDOT, Environmental Services Division, 1263 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89712, or by calling (775) 888-7013. Copies can be viewed at the Fernley Branch Library, 575 Silver Lace Boulevard, the Silver Stage Branch Library, 3905 Highway 50 West, Silver Springs, and the Dayton Valley Branch Library, 321 Dayton Valley Road.

Wednesday, November 5, 2014
4 – 7 p.m.

Presentation at 5:30 p.m.

**Silver Stage High School
3755 W. Spruce Avenue
Silver Springs, NV 89429**

The hearing will be an open house format from 4 to 7 p.m. with a formal presentation at 5:30 p.m. followed by a short question and answer period.

Comments accepted until 5 p.m. Friday, November 21, 2014.

You can submit comments in person at the hearing or email your comments to

info@dot.state.nv.us with a reference to this project in the subject line. Comments can also be mailed to Pedro Rodriguez, NDOT Project Manager, Nevada Department of Transportation, 1263 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89712. Requests for general information about the project can also be made to Pedro Rodriguez at (775) 888-7321, by e-mail to prodriguez@dot.state.nv.us.

IF RIGHT-OF-WAY IS NEEDED: The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 will govern the acquisition of right-of-way that may be necessary for this project. More detailed information regarding right-of-way can be obtained from the NDOT's Right-of-Way Division, 1263 S. Stewart Street, Carson City, Nevada 89712, or by calling (775) 888-7480.

NOTE: Reasonable efforts will be made to assist and accommodate physically handicapped persons desiring to attend the meeting. Requests for auxiliary aids or services to assist individuals with disabilities or limited English proficiency should be made with as much advance notice as possible to Julie Maxey, Nevada Department of Transportation, Public Hearings Officer, at (775) 888-7171.

Figure 4-E — SAMPLE LOCATION/DESIGN TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

The EA must be available for review for a period of 30 days. Comments on the EA can be submitted in written or electronic media to NDOT or the FHWA within 30 days of the availability of the EA unless the FHWA determines, for good cause, that a different period is warranted. The EA will be available for a minimum of 15 days prior to and after the Location/Design Hearing.

The Transportation Notice will provide the basis for newspaper advertisements and web advertising for Location/Design Hearing. Advertising shall be at a minimum in accordance with NDOT's Public Involvement Policy. Additional targeted advertising and noticing, tailored to each project, may be required.

Determine, based on the composition of the surrounding neighborhoods, if a Spanish language or other applicable language version of the Transportation Notice is needed.

Development of public noticing and advertising will be coordinated with the Environmental Services Division, NDOT Public Hearings Officer, and NDOT Public Information Office. For further information on NDOT's public involvement procedures, see Chapter 6.

Regulations and Guidance

[23 CFR 771.119 "Environmental assessments"](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 12:

LOCATION/DESIGN HEARING

The Environmental Services Division, in cooperation with the NDOT Public Hearings Officer and the FHWA Division Office, will hold a Location/Design Hearing. A Location/Design Hearing is to be held for all FHWA/NDOT projects requiring an EA, except for EAs prepared for the acquisition or expansion of a material source or other projects as approved by FHWA. FHWA, NDOT and the cooperating land managing agency will determine on a case-by-case basis if a Location/Design Hearing is warranted for a material site EA.

Information presented at the meeting will include items such as:

- project location,
- project description,
- purpose and need for the project,
- summary environmental impacts and mitigation measures, and
- project schedule.

The meeting will be an open-house style meeting and include display boards, a formal presentation, and a short question and answer period following the formal presentation. Additionally, a handout packet will be prepared for each person in attendance. The handout will include a welcome letter, a copy of the presentation, the purpose and need for the project, a summary of environmental impacts and mitigation measures, copies of each display board, and a comment form.

Determine, based on the composition of the surrounding neighborhoods, if a Spanish language or other applicable language version of the meeting handout or presentation is needed and if a translator should attend the meeting.

See Chapter 6 for descriptions of public hearing types and other aspects of NDOT's public involvement procedures.

Regulations and Guidance

[23 CFR 771.111\(h\) "Early coordination, public involvement and project development"](#)
[NDOT Public Involvement Website](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 13:

REVISION OF APPROVED EA

If an EA requires substantive changes based on comments received from public review and the Location/Design Hearing a revised EA will be drafted. The revised EA will be sent to cooperating agencies and the FHWA for review.

The Chief of the Environmental Services Division, FHWA Project Engineer and the Division Office Environmental Program Manager will approve and sign the revised EA for public review. Once approved, a Transportation Notice will be prepared noticing the availability of the revised EA for public review.

Hard copies of the EA will be made available for public inspection at NDOT headquarters, at the appropriate NDOT District Office, the FHWA Division Office, and at public libraries in the vicinity of the project.

The document will be available for review and downloading on the internet via NDOT's web page. The Transportation Notice will be forwarded via email or US Postal Service to affected units of Federal, State and local government, the public and to the Nevada Department of Administration, State Clearinghouse. Requests for electronic (CD) or hard copies of the EA will be accommodated.

Comments on the revised EA can be submitted in written or electronic media to NDOT or the FHWA within 30 days of the availability of the EA unless the FHWA determines, for good cause, that a different period is warranted. The Notice of Availability of the revised EA in local newspapers will announce where and how the EA may be obtained or reviewed. The EA must be available for review for a period of 30 days.

Consultation between NDOT Environmental Services Division and the FHWA will determine if another public hearing is needed.

Non-substantive changes to the EA can be addressed in an errata sheet. This errata sheet should be sent to all recipients of the Location/Design Hearing notice and any other entities or individuals who were forwarded electronic or hard copies of the EA.

If needed, an errata sheet can be prepared to address any non-substantive errors or omissions from the EA that should be corrected. The errata sheet should be included in all copies of the EA, placed as the first page following the cover page.

Regulations and Guidance

[23 CFR 771.119 “Environmental assessments”](#)

ACTIVITY NO. 14:

REQUEST FOR A FONSI

If NDOT determines the recommended preferred alternative has no significant impacts, the Environmental Services Division will prepare a request for a FONSI. The request will be sent by the Environmental Services Division to the FHWA Project Engineer along with a draft FONSI, a copy of the EA, and the Location/Design Hearing transcript. The draft FONSI will provide responses to all substantive comments received from the Location Design Hearing and public review.

Regulations and Guidance

[23 CFR 771.119 “Environmental assessments”](#)

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006

ACTIVITY NO. 15:

FHWA ISSUES FONSI

If the FHWA concurs with NDOT’s determination that the project will have no significant impacts, it will finalize the draft FONSI and provide approval signatures. FHWA will forward NDOT the approved FONSI.

After the FHWA has issued the FONSI, the Environmental Services Division will prepare a Notice of Availability of the FONSI. The Notice of Availability will be forwarded to the affected units of Federal, State and local government as appropriate and posted on NDOT’s website. See Figure 4-F for a sample Notice of FONSI Availability. The FONSI will be available from NDOT and the FHWA Division Office upon request. See Section 2.3, “Preparing an Administrative Record”.

Regulations and Guidance

[23 CFR 771.121 “Findings of no significant impact”](#)

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006



TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY



FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on January 13, 2015 in regards to the Environmental Assessment (EA) approved on October 8, 2014 for the USA Parkway State Route (SR) 439 project in Storey and Lyon Counties, Nevada.

The FONSI and EA are available to the public at:

http://www.nevadadot.com/Projects_and_Programs/Road_Projects/USA_Parkway_-_I-80_to_US_50.aspx

The FONSI and EA are also available for viewing at the following locations:

Nevada Department of Transportation
Environmental Services Division
1263 South Stewart Street
Carson City, NV 89712
(775) 888-7013

Nevada Department of Transportation
District II Offices
310 Galletti Way
Sparks, NV 89431
(775) 834-8300

Information regarding the FONSI and EA may be obtained by contacting Steve Cooke, P.E., Chief, Environmental Services Division, Nevada Department of Transportation, 1263 South Stewart Street, Carson City, NV 89712, scooke@dot.state.nv.us, (775) 888-7013.

Figure 4-F — SAMPLE NOTICE OF FONSI AVAILABILITY

ACTIVITY NO. 16:

MONITOR FINAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

Representatives of the Environmental Services Division will review contract plans and special provisions and will attend preconstruction conferences for projects to ensure permit obligations, environmental commitments and environmental mitigation measures are adequately addressed.

See Section 2.4 for additional information on environmental commitments/permit obligations.

During the construction phase of the project, the Environmental Services Division in coordination with the Resident Engineer will monitor construction activities to ensure the contractor complies with the Construction Contract Documents, especially those concerning permit obligations, environmental commitments, and environmental mitigation measures.

Regulations and Guidance

[FHWA/FTA SAFETEA-LU Environmental Review Process Final Guidance](#) – November 2006
AASHTO Practitioner's Handbook 04 [Tracking Compliance with Environmental Commitments and Use of Environmental Monitors](#) – November 2006

4.2 RE-EVALUATIONS

After approval of the FONSI, NDOT shall consult with FHWA prior to requesting any major approvals or grants to establish whether the approved EA and FONSI remain valid.

These consultations will be documented when determined necessary by FHWA and in a format agreed to by FHWA. The regulations and guidance cited below describe the triggers (e.g., timeframes) for re-evaluating NEPA documents and approvals:

- [23 CFR 771.129 "Re-evaluations"](#)
- [FHWA Environmental Guidebook](#)
- [FHWA Technical Advisory T6640.8A](#) – October 1987