

# Scoping Summary Report

## Northwest State Route 138 Corridor Improvement Project EA 265100



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California Department of Transportation  
Division of Environmental Planning  
100 S. Main Street, MS 16A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Metro**<sup>®</sup>



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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Northwest State Route 138 (SR-138) Corridor Improvement project has been initiated by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in coordination with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). The SR-138 project involves improvements to approximately 36 miles of highway between Interstate 5 (I-5) and State Route 14 (SR-14) in Los Angeles County. The project is proposed to improve mobility and access for people and goods as well as improving safety within the corridor.

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) will be prepared. CEQA and NEPA both require public participation throughout the development of the 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.

MAP-21 stands for the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act and was signed into law by President Obama on July 6th, 2012. California participated in the "Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program" (Pilot Program) pursuant to 23 USC 327 and established by SAFETEA-LU, for more than five years, beginning July 1, 2007 and ending September 30, 2012. MAP-21 amended 23 USC 327 to establish a revised and permanent Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program. As a result, Caltrans entered into a Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to 23 USC 327 (NEPA Assignment MOU) with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In summary, Caltrans continues to assume FHWA responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws in the same manner as was assigned under the Pilot Program, with minor changes. MAP-21 added the following:

- Lead agencies must develop a coordination plan for public and agency participation and comment during the environmental review process.
- FHWA may issue a 150-day statute of limitations (SOL) on claims against USDOT and other federal agencies for certain environmental and other approval actions. The 150-day SOL starts from the date that notice is published in the Federal Register by FHWA.

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 February 28, 2014 through April 18, 2014. Public and agency outreach efforts will continue throughout the project development process.

## **2.0 OUTREACH SUMMARY**

### **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 (NOP). The NOI signals the intent of a federal agency to prepare an EIS. The NOI for this project was published on November 13, 2013 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 #2013111016) and circulated to public agencies and other interested parties in compliance with Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines on November 6, 2013. 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.

The following table summarizes the comment letters received by agencies on the NOI/NOP.

AGENCY	COMMENT
Department of Defense	- Requests coordination with Edwards Air Force base.
Environmental Protection Agency	- Accept Participating/Cooperating Agency role. - Provided recommendations for water and wetland resources, biological resources, construction emissions and environmental justice issues to address impacts and provide avoidance and mitigation measures.
California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CADFW)	- Accepts Participating Agency role but requests that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is signed so both agencies' roles are clearly defined. - Wildlife Corridor Study should be conducted. - The Environmental Document should include information on listed species impacts. - Mitigation should be provided for any impacts to the biological environment.
California Department of Water Resources (DWR)	- The proposed project would cross the DWR's California Aqueduct East Branch and therefore Caltrans will be required to obtain an encroachment permit from DWR. - Any modifications to DWR's bridge and access roads will be reviewed and approved by DWR prior to construction.
Los Angeles County Fire Department	- Any road closures/ detours have the potential to impact emergency response times and must be coordinated with Fire Dept. - Prior to construction, provide 3 sets of detour plans with planned closures.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Notify Fire Dept. at least 3 days in advance of any street closures.</li> <li>- Disruptions to water service must be coordinated and alternative water sources must be provided.</li> <li>- Statutory responsibilities of the County Fire Department include: erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, cultural resources, the County Oak Tree Ordinance, and fuel modification for very high fire hazard zones.</li> </ul>
Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project is within both the Los Angeles County and Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board jurisdictions.</li> <li>- All surface waters are waters of the state and the project will require coordination with the Regional Water Quality Control Boards as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for federal waters.</li> <li>- Beneficial uses of the water resources should also be identified in the Environmental document.</li> <li>- Wetland impacts should be avoided.</li> <li>- Post construction stormwater management should be considered and vegetation clearing should be kept to a minimum.</li> <li>- Various permits will be required for the proposed project (see full letter).</li> </ul>
Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The appropriate Information Center should be contacted for a record search.</li> <li>- Mitigation plans should include provisions for accidentally uncovered archaeological or cultural remains.</li> </ul>

## **2.2 PUBLIC NOTICES AND PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Extensive efforts have been made to encourage public and agency participation in the scoping process. These efforts have included:

- Publishing a Notice of Intent and Notice of Preparation (NOI/NOP)
- Establishing a project website complete with interactive project map and comment abilities for convenient public access and input
- Mailing of over 4,000 project postcards to residents and property owners
- Mailing letters to appropriate local, state and federal agencies and elected officials
- Publishing scoping notices in local newspapers- The Antelope Valley Press and La Opinion
- Holding one (1) formal agency scoping meeting and a follow-up teleconference

- Holding two (2) formal public scoping meetings (March 15<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014). One of the two meetings was broadcasted live via webcast to maximize public participation.

Over 125 people attended the two public scoping meetings in person and the live video stream of the meeting on March 15<sup>th</sup> generated over 100 online views.

The following is a general summary of issues that were brought up at the scoping meetings:

- Safety concerns- lack of sight distance and turn pockets
- Light and glare issues- want to keep a dark night sky
- Apprehension about project causing urban sprawl
- Right of way- residents want to keep their property
- Questions about how the project will affect the water lines and wells in the area

### 3.0 PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS

During the scoping comment period from February 28, 2014 to April 18, 2014, the following public agency comments were received:

AGENCY	COMMENTS
Environmental Protection Agency, Carolyn Mulvihill (via e-mail)	- No comments at this time, EPA will review purpose and need, alternatives, and other project materials as they are made available.
County of Los Angeles, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neenach Wildlife Sanctuary is a County of LA facility located approximately 0.3 miles from the project limits (at 210 Street West and West Avenue D).</li> <li>- 4 LA County trails traverse the project limits.</li> <li>- The project is within a Rural Outdoor Lighting District which regulates lighting and maintains dark night skies.</li> <li>- Project would generate dust and emissions that should be taken into consideration especially for elderly people and other vulnerable receptors.</li> <li>- Environmental document should take into consideration how wildlife and vegetation would be affected within the Sanctuary.</li> <li>- Some areas are County designated "Significant Ecological Areas" for the Joshua Tree Woodlands and California Juniper.</li> <li>- The area is an important wildlife corridor and wildlife crossings should be considered.</li> <li>- Mitigation measures should be developed to abate noise impacts.</li> <li>- DPR requests coordination for proposed new trail crossings (equestrian, pedestrian, mixed-use and bicycle) as well as for the Pacific Crest Trail.</li> <li>- Currently there are 3 trails that cross SR-138 at 4 locations.</li> <li>- Trail comments: Provide at-grade trail crossings,</li> </ul>

	underpasses, and overpasses where feasible. Include crosswalks, stoplights, and appropriate signage.
The California High- Speed Rail Authority (CAHSRA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage the pursuit of a range of alternatives that give stakeholders a wide range of options and benefits to consider.</li> <li>- Consider high-speed rail planning documents for Bakersfield and Palmdale and Palmdale to Los Angeles project sections. (website cited where documents can be found)</li> </ul>
California Highway Patrol (CHP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 20 miles of SR-138 is within Antelope Valley Area of the CHP and approximately 16 miles is within Newhall Area CHP jurisdiction.</li> <li>- Contractors for the project should work closely with Antelope Valley and Newhall CHP to determine the best times for closures and alternate routes.</li> <li>- Utilizing CHP officers for traffic control (COZEEP) would help prevent collisions.</li> <li>- Temporary reduction in the current 55 mile-per-hour speed limit should be considered.</li> <li>- Recommended that a concrete center divider be incorporated into the project plans.</li> <li>- Widened shoulders would enhance safety of the route.</li> </ul>
County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (letter 1 of 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project may impact existing or proposed trunk sewers which are located directly under or cross beneath the proposed project alignment.</li> <li>- Project plans are needed before a detailed response can be made.</li> <li>- To prepare the required plans, a map of the proposed alignment must be sent to: Mr. Jon Ganz 1955 Workman Mill Road Whittier, CA 90601-4998</li> </ul>
County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (letter 2 of 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Lancaster Water Reclamation Plant (LWRP) is located near the northeast corner of the SR-14 and SR-138 interchange. The entryway for personnel and vehicles is through the main gate, located at 1865 West Avenue and trucks will require access during construction, Monday-Sunday from 6:00am-4:30pm.</li> </ul>
County of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department Santa Clarita Valley Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generally supportive of the project.</li> <li>- Will review additional environmental documentation as it is made available.</li> <li>- The project is partially located within the service area of the Lancaster station and they should also be notified of the project.</li> </ul>
County of Los Angeles Sheriff's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generally supportive of the proposed project because it will</li> </ul>

Department Headquarters	<p>enhance patrol and emergency operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Department's assessment is subject to change as additional information is made available.</li> </ul>
California Department of Water Resources (DWR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposed project crosses the DWR California Aqueduct at several locations and borders Quail Lake.</li> <li>- Any improvements/ alterations to the California Aqueduct or associated facilities will require an encroachment permit or other form of agreement prior to construction.</li> <li>- Multiple drainages may also be impacted. Any alteration to existing drainage patterns that would affect DWR right-of-way need to be addressed in the environmental document.</li> <li>- Provide any further documents/studies to DWR for review.</li> </ul>
City of Palmdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High Speed Rail should be considered as a part of the project scope.</li> </ul>

#### 4.0 PUBLIC ORGANIZATION COMMENTS

During the scoping comment period from February 28, 2014 to April 18, 2014, the following public organization comments were received:

ORGANIZATION	COMMENTS
West Valley County Water District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Concerned about water service disruption.</li> <li>-Turn lanes but no displacement of residences or buildings is supported.</li> <li>- Concerns over eminent domain process and fair compensation for properties.</li> <li>- If there is only bond funding for the Environmental process but not construction, why are these meetings being held?</li> <li>-Bypass lanes and left-turn lanes are all that's needed.</li> <li>- Preserve the rural community.</li> </ul>
Antelope Acres Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project should only include minor improvements that include: paving the shoulders, adding passing lanes where residents would not be displaced, and adding several 4-way stoplights (ex: at 90<sup>th</sup> Street West).</li> <li>- Against any displacement of residents/ taking of homes.</li> <li>- Want to remain a very rural community.</li> <li>- Many homes are self-built and self-reliant farms, therefore compensation would most likely be inadequate.</li> <li>- Limit improvements to benefit those living in the community and not those travelling through it.</li> </ul>
Fairmont Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Solar panel glare needs to be fixed; it is a driving hazard.</li> <li>- Suggestions: Stop signs with flashing lights and shoulders needs to be built up and paved.</li> <li>- Flooding at 170<sup>th</sup> Street West and SR-138 during rain events should be addressed.</li> </ul>



## 5.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following is a summary of written comments that were received during the formal scoping process.

COMMENT NUMBER	COMMENTS
PC #1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recommends a phased approach so that safety improvements can be made instead of waiting years before entire project is built.</li> <li>- Suggestion: at Grace Chapel in Neenach, install a no pass sign and extend double yellow lines.</li> </ul>
PC #2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scoping meeting maps were not accurate- they did not show commenter's property.</li> <li>- Drainage details are needed.</li> </ul>
PC #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proposes a 4-lane highway for minimal water line impacts and to buy all the adjacent properties on the north side of SR- 138 from 80<sup>th</sup> West to 90<sup>th</sup> West.</li> <li>- Fund a new 8- inch perimeter water main for Sundale Water Co.</li> <li>- Bypass option is unfeasible.</li> <li>- Mature ground burrowing owls have been seen in the area of Avenue C- 6 and 77<sup>th</sup> West.</li> <li>- On wet years there are vernal pools that exist for up to 8 weeks in the spring (80<sup>th</sup> West and 75<sup>th</sup> West, between Avenue C and C-2).</li> </ul>
PC #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General questions about: number of freeway exits, if there would be improvements to any existing cross streets with Ave. D, overpasses/underpasses, street widening, lighting, park and ride locations, and bus service plans.</li> </ul>
PC #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project will have beneficial impacts. Ecology, traffic, and economics will be improved.</li> <li>- In support of the project.</li> </ul>
PC #6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commenter owns land on the corner of the 110th &amp; SR- 138- will land be taken?</li> <li>- If so, how will value be determined?</li> </ul>
PC #7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suggestion to take all the properties (330 ft + 80 existing) on the north side of SR- 138 from 80<sup>th</sup> West to 90<sup>th</sup> West for future right of way based on the 4 or 6-lane proposals.</li> </ul>
PC #8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current conditions with no stop signs or signals on SR-138 make travel efficient. Don't change that by adding traffic lights.</li> <li>- Want to keep the rural character of the area.</li> </ul>
PC #9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-route SR-138 to Avenue A instead of widening the existing route. It is flat with easy access and farther from the hills so there would be less drainage problems and less residential impacts.</li> <li>- The majority of residents do not want a large divided highway going through their communities due to increased noise, traffic, dust and allergies.</li> </ul>
PC #10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SR-138 is an important bike route and is featured by the annual High Desert Cyclists' fall century event. Bike facility improvements should be</li> </ul>

	<p>considered with this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is not enough traffic to justify widening the route. Consider shoulder improvements, turn lanes, and minor safety improvements only.</li> </ul>
PC #11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep resident notified of project as it moves forward.</li> </ul>
PC#12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How will project affect my property?</li> <li>- How many lanes will be built?</li> <li>- Who will maintain Avenue D if the new route goes around that area?</li> <li>- When would work start?</li> <li>- How would property owners be compensated? Would it be fair market value?</li> <li>- Suggestions: On/Off ramps for 60<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup>, and 110<sup>th</sup> Streets West or traffic signals at these intersections.</li> <li>- Add right and left turn lanes for residential areas.</li> </ul>
PC #13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a water well next to SR-138 between 280<sup>th</sup> West and Margalo. Concern over ability to provide adequate water supply to the community if the well must be moved/acquired.</li> <li>- Support for the bypass option.</li> <li>- Use Tejon Ranch property between 290<sup>th</sup> and 280<sup>th</sup> and no communities would be affected.</li> </ul>
PC #14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Do not ruin scenic natural environment to build a large highway.</li> <li>- Joshua trees and junipers are rare and not transplanted successfully.</li> </ul>
PC #15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support for Antelope Acres bypass option.</li> <li>- Opposed to widening through Antelope Acres.</li> </ul>
PC #16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider scenic turnouts for CA poppy viewing and include the Poppy Reserve in the project development process.</li> </ul>
PC #17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Traffic comments: passing lanes and turn lanes are more reasonable instead of highway widening.</li> <li>- Center turn lanes and turn pockets are most needed at: 170<sup>th</sup> Street West, through Antelope Acres, and 60<sup>th</sup> Street West.</li> </ul>
PC #18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bus and bicyclist comment- no bicyclists seen using this route.</li> </ul>
PC #19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does not support bypass around Antelope Acres.</li> <li>- Installation of a soundwall from 75<sup>th</sup> Street to 90<sup>th</sup> Street could alleviate noise and increase safety.</li> <li>- Supportive of overall project (4 lanes).</li> </ul>
PC #20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Water supply concerns for area north of SR-138 because new well would be needed.</li> <li>- Concern for loss of trees (habitat for birds and bats) and pond (habitat for amphibians).</li> </ul>
PC #21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project opposition. Concern for loss of homes.</li> <li>- Suggest passing lanes where no communities would be affected and some stoplights.</li> </ul>
PC #22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opposed.</li> <li>- Add passing lanes, 4-way stoplights and shoulder paving but no more.</li> <li>- Highway 58 can handle the increase in traffic in the area.</li> </ul>
PC #23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Telephone Repeater station is historical and was built in 1917.</li> </ul>

	- Offered architectural history knowledge on the property.
PC #24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suggests Avenue C or area just north of there from SR-14 to Neenach as alternate route.</li> <li>- Curve in SR-138 at 40<sup>th</sup> Street West makes passing dangerous and needs to be fixed.</li> <li>- Traffic control device needed at 60<sup>th</sup> St and 90<sup>th</sup> St west- possibly flashing red lights for north/south traffic or an overpass or underpass.</li> <li>- Traffic has increased due to workers at the new solar farms in the area.</li> <li>- The alternate alignment that was shown on the plans to minimize disturbance to residents doesn't make sense and Avenue C option would be better.</li> <li>- Wants to be updated on project status as it progresses.</li> </ul>
PC #25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Antelope Acres will be divided in half with any expansion of Avenue D (SR-138).</li> <li>- An expressway would bring development and cause undesirable urban sprawl.</li> <li>- Additional traffic would cause increased air pollution and health problems associated with it.</li> <li>- A better option would be to upgrade SR-58 and US-395 from Kramer junction to its intersection with I-5.</li> <li>- Support No-Build Alternative and preservation of rural area.</li> </ul>
PC #26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supportive of project.</li> <li>- Left turn pockets would help the route.</li> </ul>
PC #27 *comment was submitted through online interactive map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The entire corridor is in need safety improvements.</li> <li>- Supportive of expansion of the SR-138 corridor.</li> <li>- Supporting the expansion of SR-138 is critical for job prospects in the Antelope Valley.</li> </ul>
PC #28	- Maps were mailed that identified where the constituent would like to see the route transect.
PC #29	- Supportive of Neenach detour option and detour should be considered for Antelope Acres as well.
PC #30	- Concerned about how zoning for the area will be affected with the proposed project.
PC #31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recreational cyclists use SR-138 from 110<sup>th</sup> Street east to SR-14 and cross SR-138 at 60<sup>th</sup> Street.</li> <li>- Few cyclists use SR-138 towards I-5.</li> <li>- The section close to Three Points is a popular route that links into 245<sup>th</sup> Street and Pine Canyon Road.</li> </ul>

## 6.0 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 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 began in March/April 2014 and will continue throughout the project development process.

## **7.0 APPENDICES**