

CHAPTER 6

Comments and Coordination

PAST COORDINATION AND PROJECT ACTIONS

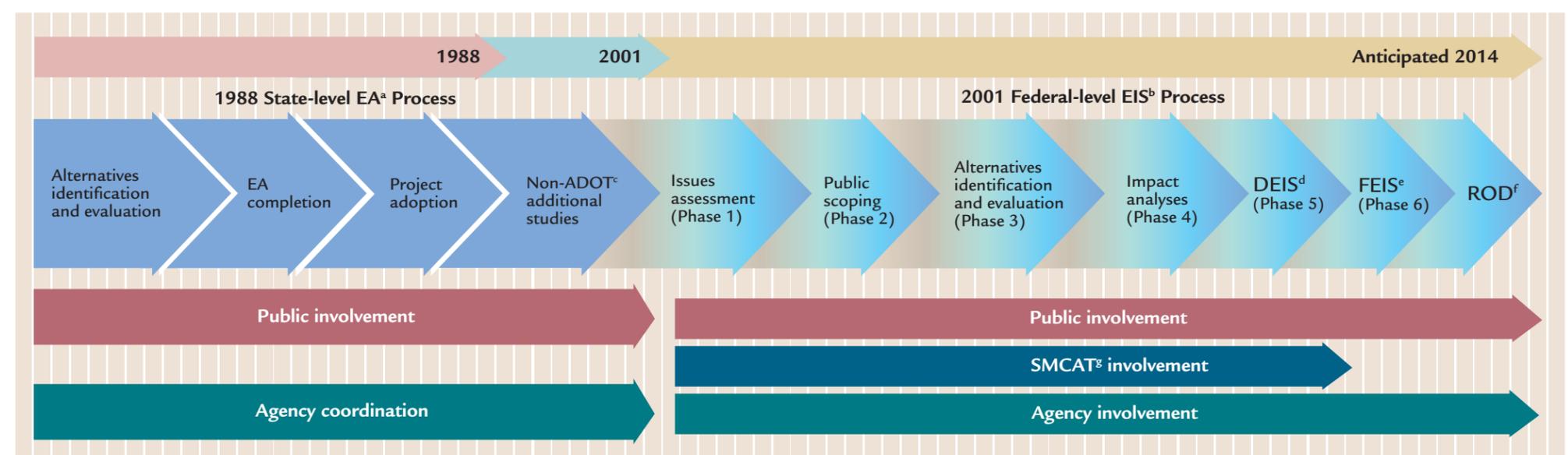
Public and agency interaction early and often in the environmental impact statement (EIS) process can help shape and influence proposed action-related determinations by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The involvement can also contribute to an informed public, to constructive agency participation, and ultimately to better decision-making. The proposed action has a history of public involvement and agency coordination. This chapter summarizes the history and presents:

- ▶ activities undertaken to engage the agencies and public in constructive dialogue about the proposed action since the start of the EIS process in 2001
- ▶ the results of those activities
- ▶ future coordination activities planned through the completion of the EIS process

SUMMARY OF PAST AGENCY AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, PRE-EIS PROCESS

Early versions of the proposed action have been the subject of several studies to determine the need for the facility in the region, the integrated nature of the facility with other major transportation investments, the location/alignment of the facility, and what it might look like. Every study has actively sought to engage the public and agencies in the processes surrounding these determinations (Figure 6-1).

Figure 6-1 Public Involvement, South Mountain Freeway History



^a environmental assessment ^b environmental impact statement ^c Arizona Department of Transportation ^d Draft Environmental Impact Statement
^e Final Environmental Impact Statement ^f record of decision ^g South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team

Agency and public concerns over social impacts, parkland impacts, project costs, and ongoing coordination with the Gila River Indian Community have remained constant since the late 1980s.

In the early 1980s, planners from local jurisdictions that make up the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) membership (see text box on page 1-4 for more information regarding MAG) began to study regional transportation needs. During this time, MAG actively sought public and other agencies' input in the process to develop the region's *Long-Range Transportation Plan*

(LRTP) (which included the concept of the proposed freeway as a prominent piece of the planned 232-mile Regional Freeway and Highway System).

In 1985, voters of Maricopa County passed Proposition 300 to create a one-half cent sales tax to fund the construction of the Regional Freeway and Highway System. The public was invited to continue

The public's 1988 study concerns

Many of the comments received on studies conducted in the 1980s mirror concerns being expressed by the contributing public for the EIS process. Examples of comments received on the prior ADOT-sponsored studies include:

- concern about impacts on Sunridge Elementary School, located at 61st Avenue, and to properties west of 59th Avenue between Interstate 10 (I-10) (Papago Freeway) and Buckeye Road
- request to move the alignment farther west from the 51st Avenue corridor toward a more westerly corridor along 75th or 99th avenues
- request to obtain Community right-of-way (R/W) to avoid impacts on Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve (SMPP) and industrial improvements along I-10 (Maricopa Freeway) near Pecos Road
- concerns about compensation resulting from R/W acquisition process
- continued engagement of the Community regarding its request for a federal EIS to be prepared and its offer to work with ADOT and MAG to locate an alignment on tribal land
- support for locating the alignment on the west side of 59th Avenue at I-10 (Papago Freeway)
- concern regarding pedestrian access across I-10 (Papago Freeway) if the 63rd Avenue bridge were removed
- questions regarding access from homes to the existing 51st Avenue
- opposition to extending the freeway loop northerly across I-10 (Papago Freeway)
- requests for early acquisition and concern for property value impacts

its involvement through the ADOT-sponsored planning of the South Mountain Freeway alignment in the late 1980s with the preparation of State-level environmental and location/design studies (see the section, *Historical Context of the Proposed Action*, beginning on page 1-5, to learn more about these studies).

The two studies for the Southwest Loop Highway (State Route [SR] 218) (previous name for the proposed freeway) were completed in January 1988. In the process, public and agency involvement was actively sought:

- ▶ Over 40 local, State, regional, and federal agencies and utility companies were contacted and involved in the State environmental assessment (EA) study.
- ▶ Public meetings were held with local planning groups, City and County advisory groups, interested development entities, and the general public on an individual-appointment basis.
- ▶ Public open houses were advertised and held at the Laveen School District Office in August 1986 and at Sunridge Elementary School in September and November 1986 and January 1987.
- ▶ A combined location/design public hearing was held for the Southwest Loop Highway in February 1987.

From this interaction, certain key issues became prominent in the earlier studies (many of these same issues and concerns have been expressed during the public involvement for the EIS process). The issues, concerns, and opportunities focused on social impacts, traffic-generated impacts such as noise intrusion and air quality degradation, parkland impacts, fiscal responsibility, and alignment location (on and off Gila River Indian Community [Community] land) (the sidebar on this page provides examples of comments received during that time frame).

Through the 1990s, comparatively few ADOT-sponsored activities to advance toward construction of what is now the proposed action were undertaken (see section, *Historical Context of the Proposed Action*, beginning on page 1-5, to learn more about factors affecting completion of the Regional Freeway and Highway System). During this period, a highly publicized, unsolicited proposal by a

private consortium to construct the freeway as a toll road kept the issue in the public arena.

In 2001, the ADOT-sponsored, FHWA-led EIS process began (of which the Final Environmental Impact Statement [FEIS] is one part). Concurrently, MAG began its process to update the region's LRTP, which it adopted in 2003 as the *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP). The updated RTP again included the proposed freeway as a component of the Regional Freeway and Highway System and again the process of updating the RTP involved extensive public interaction (see the section, *Context of the Proposed Action in Current Regional Transportation Planning*, beginning on page 1-9, to learn more about public involvement associated with the RTP update). In 2009, faced with the downturn in the economy and subsequent funding shortfalls, MAG reevaluated the RTP. As a result, the proposed action—with some modifications—remains in the plan. Throughout the EIS process, ADOT has conducted an extensive public involvement program.

AGENCY COORDINATION

The FEIS has been prepared following FHWA guidance for the EIS process. The process began with publication of the Notice of Intent on April 20, 2001, in the *Federal Register* (66[77]:20345) (see Appendix 6-1, page A741). Letters requesting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) involvement as cooperating agencies were issued. USACE and BIA agreed to be federal cooperating agencies. EPA and USFWS declined (see Appendix 1-1, beginning on page A1). In 2009, the Western Area Power Administration (Western) was invited, and agreed, to be a cooperating agency. The cooperating agencies (USACE, BIA, and Western) reviewed and approved the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and FEIS prior to public release of each document.

Agency Scoping

Agency coordination started early in the process, in October 2001, when introduction letters were sent to

232 federal, State, and local agencies. The letters provided a project overview and an invitation to the agency scoping meeting and requested any initial comments from the agencies (see the mailing list beginning on page A1 in Appendix 1-1, including a representative copy of the letter and comment letters received in response).

A 2-day agency scoping meeting was held later in the month in Phoenix. On the first day, a project overview was provided, followed by a tour of the Study Area. On the second day, agency representatives were invited to identify issues and concerns for consideration during the study by answering the following questions:

- ▶ What is your agency's responsibility? If a public entity, what is your agency's mandate to the public?
- ▶ How is your agency's mandate similar to ADOT's mandate to serve the driving public?
- ▶ Are there specific areas/services your agency is responsible for where the proposed action may be located?
- ▶ What agency information will aid in communicating agency concerns/issues/opportunities?
- ▶ What maps, plans, project designs, and/or studies apply to the proposed action and the scope of the EIS process?
- ▶ How does your agency plan to participate in the EIS process?

Ninety-five agency representatives participated in the agency scoping. The comments provided in the text box beginning on the next page generally reflect agencies' initial assessments and reactions to the proposed action. It is not uncommon for agency preferences to change later in the EIS process as additional information is discovered. Included with the agencies' comments are notations in italics directing the reader to the FEIS locations of the relevant responses.

Continuous Agency Coordination

Beginning in July 2001, monthly progress meetings have been held for stakeholders to discuss alternatives, conceptual designs, environmental impacts, and public and political acceptability of the proposed action.

Agency Scoping Comment and Response Summary

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- EPA is concerned about the proposed project's purpose and need, as outlined in its scoping letter. Traffic modeling is an important component in determining the purpose and need. *Traffic modeling is addressed extensively in Chapters 1 and 3.*
- EPA representative questioned whether it would be better to use current data based on MAG projections (based on 1995 special census data) or to use updated data obtained from the 2000 census. *2010 census data were used for MAG projections—discussed in Chapters 1 and 4.*
- EPA representative asked whether regional traffic patterns would change when updated data are input into the model. *This question is based on early data provided to EPA staff, which included patterns, volume projections, etc. The model was rerun with new data (see above bullet).*
- Indirect and cumulative effects will be an important consideration to EPA. *See the section Secondary and Cumulative Impacts, in Chapter 4.*
- The study needs to address pollution prevention where possible. *Pollution prevention is addressed in the sections Water Resources, Air Quality, Noise, Hazardous Materials, Temporary Construction Impacts, and Irreversible and Irrecoverable Commitment of Resources, all in Chapter 4.*
- EPA would like a description of effects on 1-hour ozone (O₃) nonattainment and particulate matter of 10 microns or less in diameter (PM₁₀) and particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less in diameter (PM_{2.5}) (even though the Phoenix metropolitan area is not designated as being in nonattainment for PM_{2.5}). *Particulates and mobile source air toxics (MSATs) analyses are presented in the section, Air Quality, in Chapter 4.*
- EPA encourages use of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/Section 404 integration process. *The integration process was used in the EIS process as explained in Chapter 3; in the section Waters of the United States, in Chapter 4; and as agreed upon through signature by appropriate parties of the Memorandum of Agreement presented in Appendix 4-5.*
- Environmental justice analysis should also include disadvantaged businesses analysis. *Minority and low-income populations are discussed in the Chapter 4 section, Environmental Justice and Title VI. Data regarding minority and income status associated with specific potentially displaced businesses, their employees, and their customers were either not available for analysis or the limited data available were of dubious quality. Although the City of Phoenix supplied a study that included a qualitative analysis of minority and low-income residents along one of the Western Section action alternatives, this information was not appropriate for inclusion in the FEIS. Therefore, a determination regarding the disadvantaged status of affected businesses, employees, and customers was not made.*
- The study should include potential effects on native plants, and native plants should be considered for use in project landscaping plans. *Native plants are addressed in the sections, Biological Resources and Visual Resources, in Chapter 4.*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

- USACE will be a cooperating agency in the EIS. *Noted in Chapters 1, 2, and 6.*
- The process for integration of NEPA and the Section 404 permitting processes may apply to the proposed action. *The integration process was used in the EIS process, as explained in Chapter 3; in the section Waters of the United States, in Chapter 4; and as agreed upon through signature by appropriate parties of the Memorandum of Agreement presented in Appendix 4-5.*
- Early USACE involvement in the study is requested. *USACE involvement was early and has been ongoing in the preparation of the EIS, from scoping to development of the purpose and need, alternatives development and screening, and impact analyses.*

- Public involvement will be an important element of the USACE permitting process. *Recognition that public involvement has been an important element to the process is presented throughout the EIS and is specifically addressed in Chapter 6.*
- The USACE mandate as it pertains to the proposed action is to identify the least environmentally damaging, practicable alternative. *The mandate is recognized in Chapter 3 and in the section, Waters of the United States, in Chapter 4. The mandate was included from the project outset as a criterion in the process of alternatives development and screening.*
- USACE will have jurisdictional wetland delineation oversight, and any wetland delineation assessment is to include both total acreage to be affected and a value analysis of affected acreage (value of affected acreage would be determined at permit issuance). *The mandate is recognized in Chapter 3 and in the section Waters of the United States, in Chapter 4; however, no wetlands were found in the Study Area.*
- The current value of potentially affected waters associated with the planned Rio Salado Oeste project is perceived to be lower than it would be after project implementation. *The Rio Salado Oeste project is discussed in the sections, Land Use (specifically, Public Lands) and Biological Resources (specifically in the text box regarding habitat connectivity), in Chapter 4.*

Natural Resources Conservation Service

- The Natural Resources Conservation Service mission is soil conservation. *Comment has been noted.*
- The study needs to consider the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA). *FPPA is addressed in the section, Prime and Unique Farmlands, in Chapter 4.*
- The study needs to consider direct and indirect effects on farmlands. An example of an indirect effect would be the conversion of farmland to a gasoline/foodmart constructed as a result of its advantageous proximity to the proposed action. *Direct and indirect effects on farmlands are addressed in the sections, Prime and Unique Farmlands and Secondary and Cumulative Impacts, in Chapter 4.*
- The study needs to evaluate impacts on canals and irrigation. *These types of impacts are addressed in the sections, Prime and Unique Farmlands, Cultural Resources, Land Use, and Secondary and Cumulative Impacts, in Chapter 4.*
- The study needs to consider impacts of “remnant parcels” and land severance. *These types of impacts on farmlands are addressed in the sections, Prime and Unique Farmlands and Secondary and Cumulative Impacts, in Chapter 4.*

U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs

- BIA has trust responsibilities for tribal land and realty responsibilities for private (allotment) lands. Land ownership issues associated with the proposed action include allotment lands in the western and northern portions of the Study Area. *Chapter 2 is dedicated to Community issues, including those related to allotted lands.*
- The representative from BIA suggested working closely with affected Community Districts; BIA will help with Districts 6 and 7, where the allotment lands are located. BIA is ultimately responsible for the Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian communities, especially allotment lands. *Chapter 2 is dedicated to Community issues, including those related to allotted lands.*
- BIA will assist the project team in coordinating with Districts, individual landowners, and the tribal government to identify land use/ownership issues and alternative alignments. *Comment has been noted.*
- BIA will be better able to comment on its study concerns when alignments are being evaluated. Private land ownership and real estate impacts cannot be adequately addressed until alternative alignments are defined. *Alternative alignments were defined through the alternatives development and screening process, as presented in Chapter 3.*
- BIA will serve as a cooperating agency for the EIS; a confirmation letter stating as much was sent to FHWA. *Comment has been noted in Chapters 1, 2, and 6.*

Agency Scoping Comment and Response Summary (continued)

Gila River Indian Community

- Allotted land predominates, and the Community Council doesn't necessarily speak for allottees; however, the project team needs to be sensitive to both private landowners and tribal interests. *Chapter 2 is dedicated to Community issues, including those related to allotted lands.*
- Allotted lands can have many owners, at least 51 percent of whom need to agree to any proposed project solution or alignment. *Chapter 2 is dedicated to Community issues, including those related to allotted lands.*
- A toll road corridor across the Community has been previously studied. Residents may have concerns related to the proposed action similar to those raised during the toll road corridor study. *Issues surrounding the toll road proposal are presented in Chapters 3 and 6.*
- The El Paso Natural Gas line lease renewal may present opportunities for coordinated efforts with ADOT. *As stated in Chapter 2, no alternatives on Community land were developed. Effects on the El Paso Natural Gas line are documented in the section, Temporary Construction Impacts, in Chapter 4.*
- The Community is concerned about the amount of possible truck traffic through the Community, especially trucks carrying hazardous cargo. The Community would like to encourage truck traffic to use more outlying routes such as the CANAMEX Corridor. *Truck traffic and perceptions associated with the CANAMEX corridor are discussed in Chapter 3. The transport of hazardous cargo is described in the section, Hazardous Materials, in Chapter 4.*
- The Community has the following concerns regarding air quality impacts:
 - Because of its location in Maricopa County, the northern portion of the Community is included in the nonattainment area for three criteria pollutants. Because of this, the Community is submitting an application to EPA asking to be considered "unclassifiable." *Comment has been noted.*
 - The Community is concerned that the air quality impacts of a new freeway/roadway and associated traffic emissions will affect the status of this application. *The Community's concern was noted.*
 - A planned air quality monitoring station is to be located in the Study Area at the Vee Quiva Casino. *Comment has been noted.*
- The Study Area contains more than 1,000 wild horses. The Community would like to learn how the proposed action would affect the wild horse population. *The range/habitat of the wild horse population is discussed in Chapter 4.*
- The Community would like to see continuous communication regarding impacts on cultural resources, including archaeological resources and traditional cultural properties (i.e., cemeteries, roadside memorials, historic properties, traditional housing such as sandwich houses, and the South Mountains). *The continuous communications regarding cultural resources is described in Chapter 2, in the section, Cultural Resources, in Chapter 4, and in Chapter 5.*
- The extension of 40th and 48th streets into the Community is important for economic development, and interchanges on the original alignment are desirable. *The proposed locations of service interchanges are described in Chapter 3.*
- The Community suggests that traffic analyses identify destinations for Ahwatukee Foothills Village traffic and truck traffic projections for 2025. Truck traffic projections for 2025 could be 35 to 40 percent higher because long-distance truckers would rather use services provided in Phoenix than use the SR 85/Interstate 8 bypass (CANAMEX Corridor). *A select link analysis of general traffic flow is presented in Chapter 1. Truck traffic and CANAMEX-related issues are presented in Chapter 3.*

ADOT Roadway Design Group

- The trumpet interchange concept should be reevaluated because the original 1988 concept may have negative traffic/design implications for traffic flow and safety on I-10 (Papago Freeway). *Design of the action alternatives is based on traffic data updated in August 2013 and current design standards, as discussed in Chapter 3.*

- All opportunities for environmental streamlining should be incorporated into the study. *The EIS process has focused on a defensible process, document, and record, with full disclosure to the public.*
- The study should consider impacts on the Ahwatukee Foothills Village community. *Impacts on the community are addressed in sections throughout Chapter 4.*
- Connectivity with the Regional Freeway and Highway System is important and should be considered when selecting alternatives. *Recognition of the proposed action's importance to the Regional Freeway and Highway System is discussed in Chapter 1.*
- The study should consider impacts of alternatives that could eliminate existing arterial streets (e.g., Pecos Road, 51st Street). *Impacts on the arterial street network are discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.*

ADOT Right-of-Way Group

- Connectivity to SR 202L (Santan Freeway) at the I-10 (Maricopa Freeway)/SR 202L traffic interchange should be maintained. *Connection to the referenced interchange is discussed in Chapter 3.*
- The I-10 (Papago Freeway) western freeway connection will require thinking "out of the box." As another alternative, consider possible dual/split alignments, with a western connection at SR 101L or even SR 303L and another closer to downtown Phoenix. *Alternatives development and screening of those alternatives are presented in Chapter 3. The split alignment alternative was considered (see Figure 3-5), but was eliminated from further study and was not carried into the corridor screening analysis.*
- If the previously studied alignment is to be considered for the proposed action, findings must be updated using current ADOT design standards. *Design of the action alternatives is based on traffic data updated in August 2013 and current design standards, as discussed in Chapter 3.*

ADOT Utilities Group

- The proposed action will need to follow the ADOT Red Letter process (i.e., utilities for the project must be coordinated with those for the Flood Control District of Maricopa County [FCDMC], the City of Phoenix, and Salt River Project [SRP] on the Laveen Area Conveyance Channel). *The process is described in Chapters 3 and 4.*
- ADOT will be holding a utility coordination meeting in early 2002. *Comment has been noted.*

Maricopa County Department of Transportation

- It will be important to consider the connectivity of a true loop system. *The referenced issue is discussed in Chapters 1 and 3.*
- For historical information, refer to the truck bypass study done for Laveen Village. *Information from the referenced study was considered throughout the development of the EIS.*
- Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will engage its staff in this study. *Comment has been noted.*

City of Tolleson

- The City of Tolleson does not want a 99th Avenue alignment alternative to be considered. The 6-square-mile community would be split by such an alignment. The community has already lost 17 percent of city land to the I-10 corridor widening project. *The City's position is discussed in Chapters 3 and 6. Stated concerns about impacts on the City were considered throughout the alternatives analysis and are presented in Chapter 3, and impacts are elaborated on in Chapter 4.*
- There is an increasing amount of development occurring southwest of 99th Avenue and I-10. *The development in the Study Area is referenced in Chapters 1, 3, and 4.*

Agency Scoping Comment and Response Summary (continued)

- The study needs to consider the Durango Area Drainage Plan recommendations and facilities. *The referenced recommendations have been considered in the design of the proposed action.*
- Representatives from the City of Tolleson suggested that the City of Chandler may want a connection with the Santan Freeway and that project leadership should verify this for determination of project alignment alternatives. *City of Chandler representatives have engaged in discussion of the proposed action.*

City of Gilbert

- The City of Gilbert will provide a copy of its noise ordinance. *Comment has been noted.*

City of Phoenix

- The City of Phoenix supports the study and the concept of the proposed freeway. *Comment has been noted. The City's position is further discussed in Chapter 3.*
- Although the City of Phoenix is sensitive to Ahwatukee Foothills Village residents' concerns about the Pecos Road alignment, it is not suggesting shifting the alignment to the Community. *Comment has been noted. The City's position is further discussed in Chapter 3.*
- The City of Phoenix prefers the alignment alternative near 59th Avenue in the Western Section of the Study Area (previously studied in 1988). *Comment has been noted. The City's position is further discussed in Chapter 3.*
- Environmental concerns, including noise and visual impacts, should be thoroughly addressed in the study. *Such impacts are discussed in Chapter 4.*
- Access to major arterial streets from traffic interchanges is important and should be considered in the study. *The relationship of the proposed action to the arterial street system is discussed in Chapter 3.*
- The City of Phoenix is considering a concept for a major arterial street along the south bank of the Salt River from the freeway to central Phoenix (linking to Broadway Road) to relieve traffic on I-10. *The referenced project and its relationship to the proposed action are discussed in Chapters 1 and 3.*
- The City of Phoenix's freeway mitigation program provides funds for noise mitigation for future development, landscape enhancements, and trails. *Comment has been noted; the City's program is referenced in Chapters 4 and 5.*
- The Laveen Village planning area is divided between the City of Phoenix and Maricopa County. The boundaries are located roughly along the Salt River to the Community boundary, and 67th Avenue to 27th Avenue. The alternative near 59th Avenue (previously studied in 1988) has been incorporated into the Laveen Village land use and economic development plans, so changes to the alignment alternative would be a challenge. *Economic and land use impacts of each alternative on Laveen Village are discussed in Chapter 4.*
- The Estrella Village planning area is bordered by the Salt River to the south, I-10 to the north, 107th Avenue to the west, and 19th Avenue to the east. As with Laveen Village, the 59th Avenue alignment has already been incorporated in Estrella Village planning and zoning. The Durango Area Drainage Plan also needs to be considered. *Economic and land use impacts of each alternative on Estrella Village are discussed in Chapter 4.*
- The Ahwatukee Foothills Village planning area planners have stated their desire for a four-lane parkway with signalized intersections on Pecos Road. *Comment has been noted; the facility type to satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed action is presented in Chapter 3.*
- Emergency services issues of concern to the City of Phoenix include maintaining access for emergency vehicles, adequate water supply, containment ability, and impacts on emergency communications such as telephone dispatching. *Emergency services issues are presented in the section, Social Conditions, in Chapter 4.*
- Recreational concerns in the city of Phoenix include proposed action effects on:
 - the Rio Salado Oeste project between 32nd Street and 19th Avenue, and the Tres Rios project

- the Sun Circle National Trail
- trails outside of SMPP (the new design will need to accommodate these trails)
- SMPP impacts resulting from an extension of 48th Street into the Community
- planned parks along the 59th Avenue alignment *Recreational concerns are discussed in Chapter 5 as well as in appropriate sections in Chapter 4.*
- Transportation concerns in the city of Phoenix include proposed action effects on:
 - the planned park-and-ride lot at the intersection of 48th Street and Pecos Road
 - the type and location of connection with I-10
 - local access and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes
 - water and sewer facilities *Utility concerns are discussed in Chapter 3 as well as in appropriate sections in Chapter 4.*

Salt River Project

- SRP Transmission Division presented:
 - maps of existing and planned facilities to the SRP Transmission, Distribution, and Water Divisions
 - elevated facility concepts that could conflict with the existing 500 kilovolt (kV) line paralleling Pecos Road
 - there is an existing 230 kV line on the northern side of Broadway Road/59th Avenue
 - there is a current proposal for a 230 kV line from Casa Grande to the Pecos Road/56th Street substation. *SRP's concerns are noted; coordination with SRP occurred throughout the EIS process.*
- Representative from the SRP Transmission Division suggested that Western should be included in the study process, because it may have planned transmission facilities in the Study Area vicinity. *Western was invited to participate in the process; see Chapters 1 and 6*
- SRP Distribution Division representative informed the project team that 12 kV electric distribution lines are extensive throughout the project Study Area. *Coordination with SRP occurred throughout the EIS process. Utilities are discussed in Chapter 3 and in appropriate sections in Chapter 4.*
- SRP Water Division noted:
 - Irrigation facilities in the Study Area include lateral canals and drainage ditches, most of which are gravity flow and could be interrupted by terrain changes.
 - If the proposed action were to be located on Pecos Road, SRP suggests combining the roadway plans with its drainage plans.
 - Proposed action needs to be coordinated with the Laveen Area Conveyance Channel project, which will replace Maricopa Drain 5 south of Baseline Road. The 200-foot channel will need a bridge crossing.
 - SRP Water Division recommends an alignment along the Community boundary.
 - SRP Water Division has been asked to assist a fiber-optic company with assessing the feasibility of using SRP canal R/W for installation of a multistate fiber-optic line. *Coordination with SRP occurred throughout the EIS process. Utilities are discussed in Chapter 3 and in appropriate sections in Chapter 4.*

Southwest Gas

- Southwest Gas has a major gas line located along Pecos Road and on the western side of the South Mountains (there are also other gas lines located throughout the Study Area). *Coordination with Southwest Gas occurred throughout the EIS process. Utilities are discussed in Chapter 3 and in appropriate sections in Chapter 4.*

ADOT-advertised public meetings were held on the following dates and times at these locations.

- November 5, 2001, Desert Vista High School, 16440 S. 32nd Street, Phoenix, 6–9 p.m.
- November 8, 2001, Fowler Elementary School, 6707 W. Van Buren Street, Phoenix, 6–9 p.m.
- September 30, 2003, Cesar Chavez High School, 3921 W. Baseline Road, Laveen, 6–8 p.m.
- October 1, 2003, Desert Vista High School, 16440 S. 32nd Street, Phoenix, 6–8 p.m.
- October 2, 2003, Tolleson High School, 9419 W. Van Buren, Tolleson, 6–8 p.m.
- November 15, 2005, Estrella Vista Reception Center, 1471 N. Eliseo C. Felix, Jr. Way, Avondale, noon–8 p.m.
- November 16, 2005, Corona Ranch, 7611 S. 29th Avenue, Laveen, noon–8 p.m.
- November 17, 2005, Grace Inn, 10831 S. 51st Street, Ahwatukee, noon–8 p.m.
- March 7, 2006, Holiday Inn Phoenix West, 1500 N. 51st Avenue, Phoenix, 4–7 p.m.
- March 8, 2006, Santa Maria Middle School, 7250 W. Lower Buckeye Road, Phoenix, 5–8 p.m.
- February 10, 2010, Sunridge Elementary School, 6244 W. Roosevelt Street, Phoenix, 6–8 p.m.
- February 22, 2011, Betty H. Fairfax High School, 8225 S. 59th Avenue, Laveen, 6–8 p.m.

Information about the public hearing and related community forums is provided later in this chapter.

To provide continuous coordination, regularly invited attendees included representatives of federal, State, regional, and local agencies.

The forum provided a structured opportunity for stakeholders to review and provide input to:

- ▶ methodologies, approaches, assumptions, analytical findings, and conclusions for each step of the EIS process (the section, *Alternatives Development and Screening*, beginning on page 3-1, provides an example of the stakeholder engagement in the EIS process)
- ▶ public coordination strategies and communication tools
- ▶ concept design features and options to address specific operational characteristics at both local and regional levels

In all, 94 agency meetings were held between July 2001 and December 2013. Invitees played an important role in the development of the purpose and need for the proposed action and the alternatives development and screening process to identify alternatives to be studied in detail in the FEIS.

Progress meeting invitees represented numerous disciplines appropriate to the EIS process.

Representatives from ADOT departments included:

- ▶ Bridge Design
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Director's Office
- ▶ Drainage Design
- ▶ Engineering District
- ▶ Environmental Planning Group (EPG)
- ▶ Geotechnical
- ▶ Maintenance District
- ▶ Right-of-Way
- ▶ Regional Freeway System
- ▶ Roadside Development
- ▶ Roadway Design
- ▶ State Engineer's Office
- ▶ Traffic Design

- ▶ Urban Project Management
- ▶ Utilities and Railroad

Other team members included representatives from:

- ▶ FHWA
- ▶ BIA
- ▶ USACE
- ▶ Community technical staff and elected officials
- ▶ MAG
- ▶ MCDOT
- ▶ FCDMC
- ▶ City of Phoenix
- ▶ City of Chandler
- ▶ City of Goodyear
- ▶ City of Avondale
- ▶ City of Tolleson

Agencies played an important role in the impact analyses and identification of mitigation measures for the alternatives studied in detail in the FEIS (Chapter 4, *Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation*, presents a compilation of the analyses). Technical experts interacted regularly with agency counterparts in the development of the study approach and analytical findings for the impact analyses (technical reports addressing impacts on environmental elements are available on request and can be viewed at ADOT; see page 3-2). The interaction reflected a desire on the part of ADOT to ensure that Arizona divisions of the federal agencies involved agreed that the assumptions, methods, and data met accepted scientific standards, and also adequately captured characteristics unique to central Arizona and Sonoran Desert conditions.

Throughout the study, coordination meetings were also held with the Community and BIA (see Chapter 2, *Gila River Indian Community Coordination*, to learn more about these coordination efforts).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Because of the perceived importance of the proposed action to the region's transportation network, anticipated

impacts it would create, and the level of public concern regarding the proposed action's effects on neighboring communities, ADOT and FHWA developed and implemented comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptive public involvement strategies that exceed NEPA requirements for public engagement.

Public Involvement Actions

The effort represents ADOT's most extensive public involvement program undertaken in the Phoenix area. To highlight the results of public outreach efforts undertaken leading up to publication of the DEIS in April 2013:

- ▶ Over 200 presentations were made to neighborhood groups, homeowners' associations, chambers of commerce, village planning committees, trade associations, and other interested parties.
- ▶ Twelve public meetings were held. Fifteen days prior to each meeting, display advertising was placed in *The Arizona Republic*, the *Ahwatukee Foothills News*, the *Gila River Indian News*, the *Tribune*, *La Voz*, and the *West Valley View*. Thus, newspapers with a total circulation of approximately 260,000 carried an announcement of each public meeting.
- ▶ One meeting notice flier and four newsletters were distributed throughout the Study Area in the following quantities (per distribution, per meeting): 28,500 door hangers, 5,000 inserts in the *Gila River Indian News*, and 28,000 inserts in the *Ahwatukee Foothills News*. In addition, newsletters and fliers were sent to more than 4,500 individuals on the project mailing list (see Appendix 6-2, beginning on page A742).
- ▶ In November 2008, a newsletter was mailed to the entire Study Area, including 78,700 businesses and residences and to 3,300 individuals on the project mailing list (see Appendix 6-2).
- ▶ In February 2010, a newsletter was mailed to the entire Study Area, including 62,400 businesses and residences and to 3,600 individuals on the project mailing list.

- ▶ In February 2011, an informational postcard was mailed to 5,000 businesses and residences on the project mailing list (see Appendix 6-2).
- ▶ A project Web site (azdot.gov/southmountainfreeway) was developed and an e-mail address (projects@azdot.gov) was provided so the public could receive the latest public project information and obtain feedback. Approximately half of the comments that were received prior to publication of the DEIS in April 2013 were submitted electronically through the Web site or by e-mail. Over 5,000 comments were received throughout the process up to publication of the DEIS.
- ▶ Since 2001 and up to publication of the DEIS, more than 800 news articles were published in the region's newspapers.
- ▶ A project hotline number (602-712-7006) was established so that the public could provide feedback on the study. The hotline is monitored daily, with messages forwarded when necessary to the appropriate individuals for a response within one working day. Between 2006 and 2013, more than 500 calls were received.

Strategic goals of the expanded public involvement program were to:

- ▶ obtain public input to assist in developing a well-planned, researched, and defensible EIS for the proposed action
- ▶ provide ongoing information on the study and obtain input from the primary stakeholders and broader public
- ▶ identify key issues and concerns of the public and ensure that these are appropriately considered during the process
- ▶ develop and implement a process that maintains open and continuing communications among the public, ADOT, FHWA, and the project team
- ▶ use multiple communication tools to effectively engage all population segments, thereby ensuring equal access to the EIS process (Table 6-1 presents the tools used to implement the strategy at major milestones)

Open houses and public meetings were held at key milestones in the project (see sidebar on the previous page regarding meeting dates, times, and locations). The purpose of the meetings was to ensure that the public had an opportunity to participate. For each phase, a series of meetings was held: in Ahwatukee Foothills Village, in Laveen Village, and in the Avondale/Tolleson area. The agenda and presentation were the same for each meeting, but the displays focused on issues significant to each respective geographic region. Each series of meetings was advertised in local English- and Spanish-language newspapers and through newsletters distributed throughout the Study Area. Additional information regarding the extensive public involvement specific to the review of the DEIS is provided later in this chapter.

South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team

Groups and organizations in the Study Area were identified and contacted in 2001 and asked to assign representatives to work as a voluntary, advisory team to provide advice and input to ADOT and FHWA (see sidebar on the next page on representation). The team dedicated time to:

- ▶ serve as a conduit of information with neighborhood organizations
- ▶ provide advice on public and agency meetings and on how to clearly present information to the public
- ▶ help define neighborhood and regional issues and concerns
- ▶ provide input into the identification of a Preferred Alternative (prior to the identification of a Preferred Alternative in the Western Section by ADOT, members of the South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team [SMCAT] developed evaluation criteria and participated in an automated evaluation process to identify its preferred alternative)

Specific items reviewed by the SMCAT included:

- ▶ conclusions reached in technical studies to identify potential follow-up issues, review mitigation strategies, and provide feedback on document content and readability

- ▶ recommendations on alternatives identified from detailed study and on those eliminated from detailed study in the EIS

Representatives from ADOT and FHWA attended SMCAT meetings to give members direct access to those able to make determinations. Other key stakeholders attended meetings as informational resources when necessary. Facilitators monitored meeting progress. The discussion topics for each meeting and the operating guidelines of the SMCAT were set and approved by the members.

The team initially met in private; in February 2004, the group agreed to open the meetings to the public. Over time, the SMCAT developed its own public comment guidelines, which allowed members of the public to provide written or verbal comments to the SMCAT at the end of each meeting. When time permitted, the public questions or comments were addressed by members of the project team or the SMCAT (see Appendix 6-3, beginning on page A773).

Meeting times and locations were posted on the <SouthMountainFreeway.com> Web site. The SMCAT meeting summaries and technical report summaries provided to the SMCAT members were also posted on the Web site.

A key SMCAT role in the process was to recommend a preferred action alternative in the Western Section. (In undertaking the task, the SMCAT agreed the No-Action Alternative remained viable, but would be addressed in the recommendation after issues surrounding the Eastern Section of the Study Area had been resolved.) As a first step, the team developed criteria for what it perceived would be the ideal freeway (see Appendix 6-3). Once the evaluation criteria were established, members rated how well each alternative fulfilled the criteria of the ideal freeway. Inputs from individual members were made anonymously, but the final collective results showed the consensus of the group. The group agreed to use decision-support technology to assist in the Western Section alternatives evaluation.

What is the difference between a public meeting, an open house, and a public hearing?

Public meetings are held by ADOT to provide information to the public and to solicit feedback regarding studies and proposed projects that could affect residents and neighborhoods. Comments received are recorded and responses later provided. Open houses are informal public meetings that provide an opportunity for citizens to engage in dialogue with project sponsors and technical experts. Public hearings are formal meetings held for the public and agencies to provide comments on the DEIS. Comments provided are documented and responded to in the FEIS.

South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team involvement

The SMCAT members each made long-term commitments to participate and contribute to the EIS process. During approximately 60 meetings, the group reviewed environmental and technical data, design criteria, alternatives, and other detailed project information.

Organizations/agencies/entities represented in the SMCAT

- Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
- Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
- Ahwatukee Lakewood Homeowners Association
- Arizona Public Health Association
- Arizona Trucking Association
- Arlington Estates Homeowners Association
- Calabrea Homeowners Association
- Chandler Chamber of Commerce
- City of Avondale
- City of Chandler
- City of Tolleson
- Community, District 4
- Community, District 6
- Community, District 7
- Community, Elderly Concerns Group
- Cottonfields Homeowners Association
- East Valley Partnership
- Estrella Village Planning Committee
- The Foothills Homeowners Association
- Foothills Reserve Homeowners Association
- I-10/Pecos Road Landowners Association
- Kyrene Elementary School District
- Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
- Laveen Village Planning Committee
- Maricopa County Farm Bureau
- Mountain Park Ranch Homeowners Association
- Phoenix Mountains Preservation Council
- Sierra Club
- Silverado Ranch Homeowners Association
- South Mountain Village Planning Committee
- South Mountain/Laveen Chamber of Commerce
- Southwest Valley Chamber of Commerce
- United Arizona Dairymen
- Valley Forward Association

Table 6-1 Public Involvement Tools

Tool Used	Information Type and Availability	Observations
Newsletters and informational postcards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made available to residents and businesses in the Study Area through a combination of newspaper inserts, door-to-door distribution, and mailings to contacts in the project database • Provided as a handout during group presentations and distributed to information repositories, local jurisdictions, public libraries, post offices, and other public areas where appropriate • Posted on the Web site^a and available to download as needed • Included maps, Spanish translation, and in some cases, a comment form to provide feedback contact information (see Appendix 6-2, beginning on page A742, for sample newsletters) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide distribution • Consistency in data presented • Typically multilingual • Comment forms provided • Not responsive to timely updates • Distribution (per mailing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28,500 newsletters • 5,000 inserts in <i>Gila River Indian News</i> • 28,000 inserts in the <i>Ahwatukee Foothills News</i> • Direct mail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project mailing list • Realtors (newsletter issues 1 and 4) • Property owners (newsletter issue 1) • 78,700 businesses and residences in the Study Area (November 2008 mailing) • 62,400 businesses and residences in the Study Area (February 2010 mailing) • 5,000 businesses and residences in the Study Area (February 2011 mailing of informational postcard)
Web site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided project maps and technical information, a listing of frequently asked questions and answers, current and past project newsletters, SMCAT^b agendas and meeting summaries, contact information, schedule of upcoming meetings, a glossary, news articles, summary of key issues, and a survey for public input^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently updated as new information became available • Able to send the project team an e-mail or submit an online survey from the Web site. Approximately half of the comments received were submitted electronically by the online survey or e-mail. • Notices for upcoming ADOT^d-sponsored public meetings posted on the Web site weeks in advance • Not all individuals use/have access to personal computers
Project video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created and distributed at the beginning of the project to help the public understand the EIS^e process, background, and history of the South Mountain Freeway project and the potential purpose and need for the facility • Shown at public meetings and mailed on request to residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided overview of the alternatives screening process • Created another medium to learn about the proposed action • Not responsive to timely updates • Not accessible to all population segments
Contact cards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business cards providing project-specific contact information • Distributed at public meetings and presentations • Cards include comment mailing address, the project telephone information line, e-mail address, and Web site address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succinct information for access to project team members • Little information about project issues and features provided
Information repositories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aerial maps available at the Ironwood Branch, Burton Barr, Tolleson, and Avondale libraries and at the Ahwatukee Foothills Village FedEx Office for review and reproduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to project visuals • Difficult to communicate availability of the resource
Project hotline number	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checked daily, messages forwarded to appropriate individuals for response • Resulted in more than 500 phone calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabled residents to call, leave messages • Allowed for timely responses • Difficult to document all responses
Interviews/briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided frequent briefings to local, State, and federal elected officials to provide new technical information and an update on public issues and concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted specific groups/audiences regarding specific project issues • Dissemination to larger audience sometimes difficult

^a SouthMountainFreeway.com ^b South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team ^c migrated into Arizona Department of Transportation's Projects Web portal
^d Arizona Department of Transportation ^e environmental impact statement

(continued on next page)

Table 6-1 Public Involvement Tools (continued)

Tool Used	Information Type and Availability	Observations
News releases and media interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News releases prepared and distributed by ADOT (archive of news articles posted on the project Web site) • Over 800 news articles published regarding the EIS process • KAET-TV (Public Broadcasting Service, Channel 8) <i>Horizon</i> program on the project, prior to the November 2005 public meetings • Live coverage of November 2005 public meetings on radio and television stations • Frequent, ongoing newspaper coverage of SMCAT meetings and discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide coverage of project-related activities and developments ensured • Sometimes partial or misleading information communicated
Advertisements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed in newspapers for <i>The Arizona Republic</i> distribution zones 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, and 14, 15 days prior to any ADOT-sponsored public meeting • Placed in the <i>Ahwatukee Foothills News</i> and the <i>Gila River Indian News</i> • Distributed in approximately 260,000 papers • Placed prior to public scoping meetings in November 2001, public meetings in October 2003, public meetings in November 2005, and local access public meetings in March 2006 • Placed in the <i>Tribune</i>, <i>La Voz</i>, and the <i>West Valley View</i> prior to the November 2005 public meetings • Placed in <i>The Arizona Republic</i> zone 5, <i>Prensa Hispana</i>, <i>La Voz</i>, and <i>The Arizona Informant</i> prior to the February 2010 public meeting • Placed in <i>The Arizona Republic</i> zone 5 and <i>La Voz</i> prior to the February 2011 public meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensured wide coverage of project-related activities and developments • May not have reached some population segments
Neighborhood meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project updates and public input solicitation into the planning process provided to existing neighborhood organizations on a regular basis • Public involvement strategy emphasized small group meetings with existing organizations • More than 200 presentations made to neighborhood groups, homeowners' associations, chambers of commerce, village planning committees, trade associations, and other interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created improved one-on-one communications • Improved dialogue among ADOT, FHWA^f, and affected public
Comment forms and Internet survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comment form with two to three specific questions developed at each phase of the project; distributed to meeting attendees • Comment form questions included in certain project newsletter and available on Web site • Prior to November 2005 public meetings, approximately 2,250 comments received on the purpose and need for project and alternatives • Comments solicited at public meetings for adjoining projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the same questions, collated responses regardless of how received
Contact database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of more than 4,317 people who had attended meetings, requested to be on mailing list, or submitted comments maintained throughout the study process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generated comprehensive list of interested parties
Public meetings	See the section, <i>Public Comment Summary</i> , beginning on the next page.	

^f Federal Highway Administration

Notes: Newsletters were stocked at the Community District Service Centers and at U.S. Postal Service office and branch locations in the Gila River Indian Community. The newsletters were also distributed at Gila River Indian Community meetings and festivals. Information about public involvement tools used for the public hearing and related community forums is provided later in this chapter.

In April 2006, the SMCAT recommended identification of the W101 Alternative as the preferred action alternative in the Western Section. In making its recommendation, the group expressed concern about the impacts on the jurisdictions surrounding the W101 Alternative and expressed a desire to continue to work with ADOT and FHWA to identify measures to minimize impacts as much as possible (see Appendix 6-3). ADOT, in recommending the W55 Alternative as the preliminary preferred action alternative in the Western Section, took into account the SMCAT recommendation. Specifically, ADOT concurred with SMCAT concerns about potential effects on the jurisdictions surrounding the W101 Alternative, particularly the impacts on the City of Tolleson. Further, ADOT concurred with the SMCAT recommendation pointing to some of the traffic operational benefits associated with the W101 Alternative. Based on review of more recent MAG forecasting, ADOT concluded the W101 Alternative would not provide sufficient regional benefit to outweigh its greater number of residential displacements, higher estimated project costs, and severe economic impacts. The W55 Alternative was determined to best balance regional transportation needs. The W59 Alternative now is the Preferred Alternative under evaluation.

The SMCAT reconvened in March 2007 to begin an evaluation of the Eastern Section alternatives. Shortly after the group reconvened, SMCAT members voted to add the following organizations:

- ▶ Arizona Public Health Association
- ▶ Arlington Estates Homeowners Association
- ▶ Bougainvillea Homeowners Association
- ▶ Calabrea Homeowners Association
- ▶ Mountain Park Ranch Homeowners Association
- ▶ Silverado Ranch Homeowners Association

Subsequently, the SMCAT did not meet for over a year as discussions proceeded regarding MAG funds, freeway design options, alignment of the W59 Alternative, and air quality issues. In early 2010, the SMCAT reconvened to review the changes to the RTP and the proposed action.

In the month prior to issuance of the DEIS in April 2013, the SMCAT was reconvened to participate in a panel discussion of air quality issues. After the issuance of the DEIS, the SMCAT held a meeting to express concerns and make comments on the DEIS and to ask questions of project team members. Following the meeting, SMCAT members were provided an opportunity to submit a final recommendation of “build” or “no-build” on behalf of their respective organizations based on available alternatives for the proposed South Mountain Freeway. The recommendations are provided on page A809 of Appendix 6-4.

Public Comment Summary

Public comment was solicited from project inception and through key milestones in the EIS process. Comments received were entered into an electronic database. Updated regularly, the database allowed the project team to track issue trends, sentiment, concerns, and opinions regarding the proposed action. Over time and as new information about the proposed action became available, public sentiment, opinions, and concerns were observed to “evolve” as proposed action awareness increased. Tracking public input also allowed the team to tailor public involvement strategies, i.e., to target areas of population where input had been sparse, alter notification techniques to increase participation, and/or modify project data to make them more easily understood.

Public input was received in myriad ways, including:

- ▶ documented telephone conversations with team members
- ▶ voice messages received on the project hotline
- ▶ written correspondence, including letters and e-mail messages sent to the study Web site, study e-mail address, or to specific project team members
- ▶ documented conversations with team members at public meetings and open houses
- ▶ comments on project comment forms provided at public meetings and open houses

- ▶ formal letters submitted to ADOT, FHWA, other federal agencies, and/or elected officials

Each documented comment was reviewed for applicability to the scope of the EIS process.

Confirmation of this consideration occurred through:

- ▶ preparation of a comment summary at the conclusion of each process milestone, or “phase”
- ▶ direct verbal communication back to commenting members of the public
- ▶ dissemination of project newsletters that included “articles” about key comments received
- ▶ written responses—through a formal letter from ADOT, FHWA, other federal agencies, and/or elected officials in the event the project team determined such a response appropriate (such letters can be found throughout Appendix 1-1, as illustrated by letters starting on pages A15, and A29 through A32)

Documented public comments helped to shape the EIS process and the contents of the FEIS. Throughout the FEIS, reference is made to public concerns. A sampling includes:

- ▶ influence on the content of Chapter 1, *Purpose and Need*
- ▶ dedication of a single chapter (Chapter 2) to Community coordination
- ▶ consideration of public-identified alternatives in Chapter 3, *Alternatives*
- ▶ direct discussion regarding truck use (page 3-64), vibration-related impacts (page 4-123), and hazardous materials transport (page 4-166)

Public comments are summarized at the end of each phase of the process:

- ▶ Phase 1 – Issue assessment
- ▶ Phase 2 – Public scoping
- ▶ Phase 3 – Alternatives identification and evaluation
- ▶ Phase 4 – Impact analyses
- ▶ Phase 5 – DEIS
- ▶ Phase 6 – FEIS

The following text summarizes each of these phases. As a summary, the text is appropriately not a comprehensive list of all comments received (all comments received are a matter of public record and can be found in the official project files), but presents recurring comments and trends associated with public comment.

Phase 1 – Issue Assessment

Prior to development of the public involvement program, information was collected from community leaders in 2001 to better understand the level and nature of concern about mobility in the area. Individuals were identified through discussions with local and regional officials and from archival news reports on area transportation issues.

Approximately 40 interviews were conducted during July and August 2001 with elected officials, neighborhood leaders, residents, and major landowners throughout the Study Area, as well as with highway user organizations. Interviews focused on perceived traffic problems in the area, feedback regarding the purpose and need for potential transportation projects in this area, and critical issues and concerns.

Meetings were held during the time frame with a variety of organizations—such as village planning committees—and comment and survey forms were distributed and collected at meetings and through the project Web site. Meetings also were held with District Executive Committees, private landowners, Tribal officials, and other Community members.

Comments, concerns, and suggestions gleaned from the interviews and meetings were summarized into four categories: purpose and need, primary issues, issues specific to the Community, and other issues.

Purpose and Need

Those who expressed an opinion were nearly unanimous in their belief that a significant traffic problem in the Phoenix metropolitan area exists or will in the near future. A clear majority also believe some sort of connection as proposed would help alleviate the problem. A minority believe an I-10 (Papago Freeway) connection would do little to ease

congestion and possibly would add to traffic problems in the corridor. Some suggested expanded mass transit or light rail as alternatives to building an I-10 (Papago Freeway) connection.

Primary Issues

Five primary issues evolved as common to the proposed action:

- ▶ Because of concerns about an alignment replacing Pecos Road (the original 1988 alignment), recommendations were made to investigate new alignments through the Community or north of the South Mountains.
- ▶ If the freeway were built to replace Pecos Road, increased traffic passing adjacent to Ahwatukee Foothills Village would result in substantial noise problems and deterioration in air quality.
- ▶ Substantial opposition exists to any alignment that would pass through SMPP or result in any adverse impact on the park.
- ▶ An alignment near 99th Avenue (to connect directly to SR 101L [Agua Fria Freeway] to the north) would divide the city of Tolleson and remove prime commercial property.
- ▶ An I-10 (Papago Freeway) connection would become a “truck bypass,” causing neighborhoods in the Eastern Section to suffer as a result. (Conversely, concerns generated from the Western Section expressed a need for a truck bypass, which would ease congestion on I-10 [Papago Freeway] and keep trucks off of neighborhood streets.)

Issues Specific to the Gila River Indian Community

Community residents and officials shared many of the same concerns as non-Community residents, such as increased noise and deteriorating air quality that might result if a freeway connection were to be built. However, there also were issues particular to the Native American community:

- ▶ Some Community members said they mistrust local, State, and federal governments in regard to planning

issues and do not believe the tribe has always been consulted about plans that affect the Community.

- ▶ Much of the land along the northern border of the Community is owned by individuals and families who are concerned that they would not receive “just compensation” for their land.
- ▶ The tribal government has specific plans for development in the borderlands area. However, allottees—private landowners—have their own development plans that sometimes conflict with tribal plans.
- ▶ Many members of the Community want protection of cultural, historic, and sacred sites, both within and outside the Community, such as the South Mountains.
- ▶ Confusion exists regarding ADOT planning efforts for a freeway connection and Maricopa County’s plans for widening 51st Avenue and establishing a truck bypass.
- ▶ Because some previous transportation proposals that would have affected the Community have not materialized, many people do not take the current study seriously.

Refer to Chapter 2, *Gila River Indian Community Coordination*, for related topics.

Other Issues

Also identified during Phase 1 were technical issues and potential impacts on:

- ▶ SRP electric and water facilities
- ▶ farmland and dairies
- ▶ existing and future planned development
- ▶ security and crime
- ▶ public services (e.g., schools)
- ▶ water table
- ▶ property values
- ▶ health

Chapter 4, *Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation*, addresses the above topics.

**Neighborhood Meetings,
Phase 2 – Public Scoping**

- Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce
- Ahwatukee Foothills Homeowners Association Annual Meeting
- Ahwatukee Rotary Club (two meetings)
- City of Phoenix Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee (two meetings)
- City of Phoenix Estrella Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix Laveen Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix South Mountain Village Planning Committee
- Foothills Block Watch
- Foothills Club West Community Association Annual Meeting
- Foothills Club West Homeowners Association Board of Directors
- Joint Meeting of four City of Phoenix Village Planning Committees
- Lakewood Homeowners Association Annual Meeting
- Laveen Citizens for Responsible Growth (two meetings)
- Maricopa County Farm Bureau and Dairy Association Joint Meeting
- Phoenix Mountain Preservation Council (two meetings)
- Public meeting at Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School
- Realty Executives Realtors Meeting
- Southwest Valley Mayors and Managers Meeting
- West Side City Managers Meeting

Phase 2 – Public Scoping

The purpose of the public scoping phase was to:

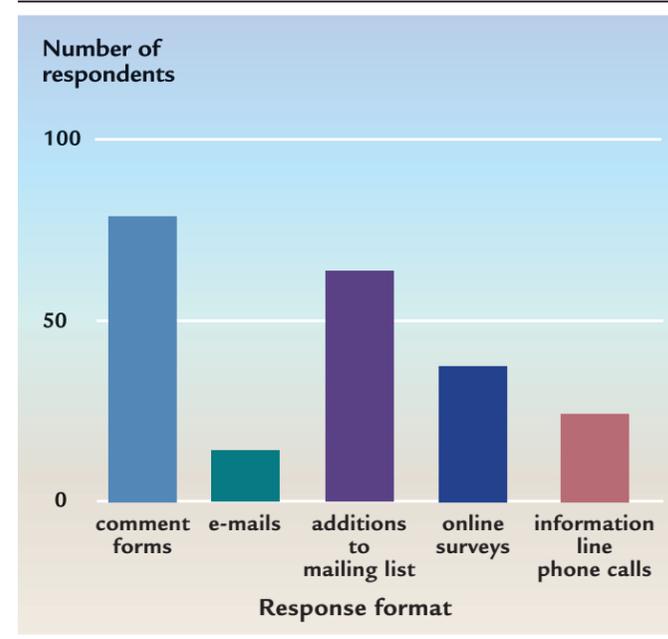
- ▶ identify issues and concerns the public would like to have addressed during the study
- ▶ determine whether the public believes there is a problem that needs to be addressed and, if so, what is that problem and what should be done
- ▶ provide an opportunity for the public to identify potential alternatives

Comments received between November 2001 and April 2002 were documented and submitted for inclusion in ADOT’s *Scoping Summary Report* (2002), and its *Purpose and Need Technical Memorandum* (2002) (see sidebar on page 3-2 for information on reviewing the report and memorandum). The following summarizes activities undertaken to engage the public in the public scoping phase:

- ▶ Presentations were made at 23 neighborhood meetings (see sidebar on this page). Approximately 600 people participated in these meetings.
- ▶ Two public meetings were held in November 2001, one at Desert Vista High School in Ahwatukee Foothills Village and a second at the Fowler Elementary School in west Phoenix. An overview of the project was presented and a moderated question-and-answer session was hosted. Following the presentation, ADOT sponsored an open house to discuss individual issues and concerns. Sixty-five people attended the public meetings.
- ▶ Booths were hosted at three local festivals: Community Fair, Tolleson Whoopie Daze, and ADOT Opening of SR 101L in northern Scottsdale.
- ▶ In addition to nine monthly coordination meetings with the Community, presentations were made to various Community groups. Approximately 200 people attended these meetings (see Chapter 2, *Gila River Indian Community Coordination*, for information about these meetings).

Figure 6-2 illustrates sources of the public scoping comments. The following is a summary of the public scoping comments received:

Figure 6-2 Public Involvement, Phase 2



Public scoping comments were received from a wide range of sources, but were predominantly from comment forms distributed at meetings. Approximately 200 comments were received during Phase 2 of public scoping.

Yes – There is a need. Thirty-one of the 65 responders at the Desert Vista High School and Fowler Elementary School public meetings agreed there was a purpose and need for the proposed action. Primary reasons included a bypass of downtown traffic, relief from I-10 congestion, completion of the freeway loop system, and accommodation of growth in the Phoenix metropolitan area.

No – There isn’t a need. Fourteen of the 65 responders didn’t think there was a need for the proposed freeway. Their reasons for opposing the projected action included the belief users would be truckers, not commuters; Ahwatukee Foothills Village would be adversely affected; existing freeways need to be improved; and the new freeway would encourage urban sprawl.

Alternatives to be Considered – Participants were asked to identify potential alternatives to be considered during the alternatives development phase of the EIS process. Figure 3-5 on page 3-7 illustrates the freeway alternatives suggested. Additional suggested improvements include:

- ▶ have interchanges only at 40th Street and Desert Foothills Parkway
- ▶ improve 51st Avenue to four lanes
- ▶ initiate rail transit
- ▶ use an arterial connector instead of a freeway
- ▶ widen Ray Road and Chandler Boulevard instead of constructing a freeway
- ▶ improve mass transit

Environmental Issues – The following environmental concerns were identified during public scoping:

- ▶ possibility for adverse health effects on neighborhoods and adjacent schools
- ▶ noise, pollution, and degradation of lifestyle

Phase 3 – Alternatives Identification and Evaluation

From September to October 2003, public input on the alternatives identified to be studied in detail was received. The following summarizes activities undertaken to engage the public during this phase:

- ▶ Presentations were made at five neighborhood meetings (see sidebar on page 6-14). Approximately 130 people participated in these meetings.
- ▶ Three public meetings were held: Desert Vista High School in Ahwatukee Foothills Village, Cesar Chavez High School in Laveen Village, and Tolleson High School in Tolleson. An overview of the project purpose and need and a moderated question-and-answer session was provided. Following the presentation, ADOT hosted an open house to discuss individual issues and concerns. Approximately 330 people attended the public meetings and 86 comment forms were returned.

Figure 6-3 on page 6-14 illustrates the format of the comments received. The comments were separated by location to better understand the specific issues of each neighborhood:

- ▶ Laveen, Estrella, and South Mountain villages
- ▶ Ahwatukee Foothills Village
- ▶ Avondale and Tolleson
- ▶ comments from unknown locations

Comment summaries are presented in Table 6-2.

Table 6-2 Public Comment Summary, Phase 3

Public Comment Question	Laveen, Estrella, and South Mountain Villages	Ahwatukee Foothills Village	Avondale and Tolleson	Comments with Unknown Origin
1. What do you think of the three alternatives (and options) being advanced for further study? (The number indicates number of similar comments received.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefer an alignment that connects to I-10^a at the SR 101L^b interchange: 12 Prefer original alignment (near 59th Avenue): 10 Prefer near 71st Avenue: 6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oppose Pecos Road as an alternative: 38 Prefer connection to SR 101L: 29 Support alignment on Pecos Road to serve the regional need, have known it would be a freeway and chose to live here because of the freeway: 24 Do not like any of the alternatives: 11 Prefer original alignment (near 59th Avenue): 8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefer original alignment (near 59th Avenue): 13 Prefer SR 101L: 8 No to any 99th Avenue or SR 101L connection: 8 Prefer near 71st Avenue: 4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not support Pecos Road: 8 Prefer SR 101L: 7
2. Are there other alternatives that should be considered?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Move farther west Consider Riggs Road Tunnel at Central Avenue Four-lane road like Grand Avenue Need monorail or light rail instead of freeway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider alternatives on Community^c land farther south of Pecos Road (e.g., Beltline, Maricopa, Ocotillo, and Queen Creek roads or 5 miles south): 45 Do not build the freeway: 18 Tunnel under the South Mountains to extend light rail to the park-and-ride lot: 2 Move south and/or west of the Sierra Estrella: 4 Connect to I-10 (Papago Freeway) 3–5 miles west of SR 101L: 3 Use Baseline Road and US 60^d: 2 Use Ray Road: 1 Extend Pecos Road as a two-lane highway: 1 Stack freeway: 1 End freeway at 40th Street: 1 Build an I-10 connection at both 51st Avenue and SR 101L: 1 Avoid SMPP^e: 1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farther west: 5 Anywhere but Tolleson: 4 Build SR 303L^f first: 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with the Community and build on its land: 7
3. Additional comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61st Avenue would split Laveen Village: 4 Make decision now and begin construction: 4 Live in Laveen Village and Tempe—freeway would save 10 minutes travel time; many of us live on west side and work on east side: 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADOT^g needs to work harder on obtaining Community alternatives and be more forthcoming with information: 11 Don't destroy Ahwatukee Foothills Village (schools, air pollution, crime) with a freeway: 17 Information was one-sided and did not provide anything new: 7 Good information; have more meetings to keep us informed: 5 Need more data on the need for the freeway and bypass traffic: 4 Too many studies and not enough building—stop and build: 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freeway will be detrimental to Tolleson and its families and economic future: 5 Sound walls are needed: 2 Build it now: 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too much studying—build it now: 3
Summary of questions from presentations to neighborhood groups and public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who (and how) makes the decision and when is the public notified? 5 What is being done to consider future development, acquire right-of-way, and protect potential corridors? 4 When and where (which end) would construction begin? 3 Why is the freeway needed? How many vehicles and trucks will use the freeway? Are the numbers adjusted for population growth? 3 What is the status of the Community involvement and alignments? If it says “no,” what happens? 3 What will be the elevation of the freeway and where will the interchanges be? 3 What is the impact to SMPP? How many acres will be affected? 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why not study alternatives on Community land (e.g., Maricopa)? 3 Who made the 1988 decision and who will decide today? 2 How much pass-through and truck traffic will use the freeway? 2 Where will the interchanges be located? 2 How many times has the project team met with Tolleson representatives? How much traffic will be removed from I-10? Can ADOT buy right-of-way now? Can the freeway be built in the Agua Fria riverbed? How would an SR 101L connection work? How much right-of-way on 99th Avenue would be needed? 		

^a Interstate 10 ^b State Route 101L (Loop 101) ^c Gila River Indian Community ^d U.S. Route 60 (Superstition Freeway) ^e Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve ^f State Route 303L (Loop 303) ^g Arizona Department of Transportation

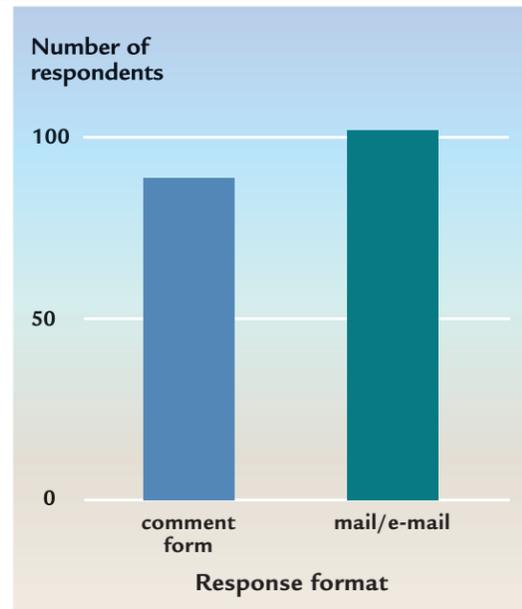
Neighborhood Meetings, Phase 3 – Alternatives

- City of Phoenix Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix Estrella Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix Laveen Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix South Mountain Village Planning Committee
- South Mountain Preservation Council

Neighborhood Meetings, Phase 4 – Impact Analyses

- Ahwatukee Foothills Chamber of Commerce – Policy Committee
- Ahwatukee Foothills Homeowners Association, Annual Meeting
- Ahwatukee Lions Club
- Foothills Club West Community Association
- Certified Commercial Investment Member
- Chandler West Rotary
- City of Chandler Transportation Commission
- City of Phoenix Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix Estrella Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix Laveen Village Planning Committee
- City of Phoenix South Mountain Village Planning Committee
- City of Tolleson, City Council Open House and Meeting
- Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School
- Kyrene School District Governing Board
- Laveen Deep Pit BBQ
- Laveen Lions Club
- Laveen Planning and Laveen Citizens for Responsible Development
- Trailside residents
- United Dairywomen Association

Figure 6-3 Public Involvement, Phase 3



Approximately 200 comments were received regarding the alternatives to be studied in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Phase 4 – Impact Analyses

During the impact analyses phase, 2005–2011, comments were received from forms submitted at public meetings (Tables 6-3 to 6-6, beginning on page 6-16), Web site survey responses, court reporter statements, and comments/letters received by mail, e-mail, or on the project hotline. The following summary is not intended to be a quantitative or statistically defensible survey of the communities listed. All comments were provided voluntarily. The following summarizes activities undertaken to engage the public during this phase.

- ADOT made 19 presentations to neighborhood organizations, village planning committees, homeowners associations, and other interested groups (see sidebar on this page for a listing of meetings attended).
- Three 8-hour public meetings were held on November 15, 16, and 17, 2005, to obtain public input on the alternatives for the proposed freeway, including the No-Action Alternative. The meetings were held in Avondale, Laveen Village,

and Ahwatukee Foothills Village. During the meetings, people were able to review maps with aerial photography of the proposed alignments, speak one-on-one to ADOT Right-of-Way Group representatives and engineering and environmental staff, and attend a presentation and question-and-answer session. Participants could submit comments on written forms or online (during or after the meetings) or through a court reporter. For those who wanted to share their comments with other attendees, a “sticky wall” was also provided—residents put their comments on index cards and literally stuck them to a wall.

- ADOT hosted two public meetings, on March 7 and 8, 2006, to obtain public input on the system traffic interchange configurations on I-10 (Papago Freeway). The focus of these meetings was to inform local residents and business owners of potential changes to freeway access. As part of the meeting, attendees were able to review maps with aerial photography of the areas of the proposed options, as well as speak with ADOT and FHWA representatives and engineering and environmental staff.
- Presentations were made and public input requested at nine homeowners’ association and neighborhood group meetings.



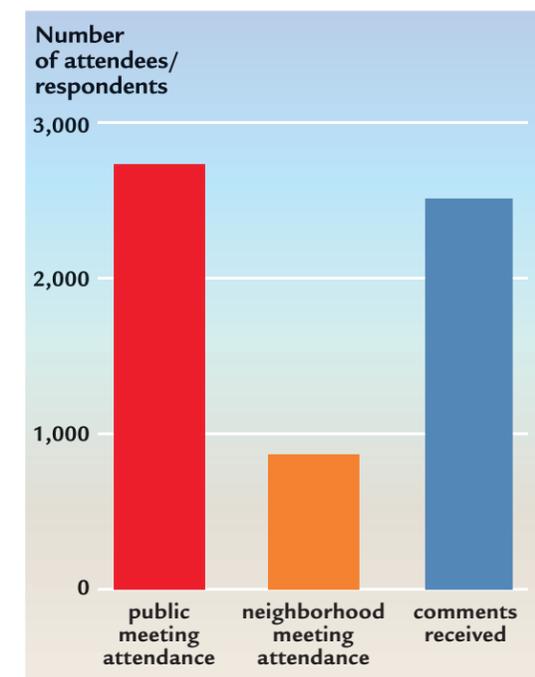
Public meeting, November 2005

During the ADOT-sponsored Phase 4 public meetings, presentations were made. As part of the presentations, the public made comments or asked questions. Questions were answered and, along with the comments, recorded. Table 6-4 displays summarized concerns based on written comments received, separated by Study Area ZIP Codes, as well as comments from residents of surrounding jurisdictions.

Figure 6-4 illustrates public and neighborhood meeting attendance and number of responses. Comments received were separated geographically to facilitate better understanding of the specific issues of each neighborhood. The geographic areas are:

- Avondale, Buckeye, and Goodyear
- Tolleson
- Estrella Village
- South Mountain Village

Figure 6-4 Public Involvement, Phase 4



Almost 3,000 people registered their attendance at the public meetings held in November 2005. The 2,000-plus attendees at the Ahwatukee Foothills Village meeting represented the largest-ever ADOT-hosted public meeting.

- ▶ Laveen Village
- ▶ Ahwatukee Foothills Village
- ▶ Northwest Valley
- ▶ Southeast Valley
- ▶ Northeast Valley

ADOT hosted a public information meeting on February 10, 2010, to discuss the shift from the W55 to the W59 Alternative. The meeting was held at Sunridge Elementary School, in Estrella Village. The purpose of this meeting was to inform area residents about the changes that had been approved as part of the revised RTP. A presentation was given at the meeting, followed by a question-and-answer session, where attendees were able to present their questions and concerns to a representative from ADOT. An open house forum concluded the meeting, where representatives from the project team were present to answer additional questions from the public. Roll plots identifying the proposed R/W necessary for the W59 Alternative and associated improvements were available for the public to view. A number of presentation boards were also displayed to provide the attendees with information related to relocation, noise barriers, study process and schedule, alternative alignments, and freeway concepts. Public comments were also collected verbally by a court reporter and submitted through comment forms, e-mails, and the project hotline.

Table 6-5 summarizes the comments received during the comment period associated with the W59 Alternative public information meeting.

On February 22, 2011, ADOT, FHWA, and MAG, in conjunction with the City of Phoenix, held a public information meeting at the Betty H. Fairfax High School cafeteria (in Laveen Village) to present the W59 Alternative and two proposed options for its alignment between Baseline and Elliot roads: one along 63rd Avenue and another along 61st Avenue. The meeting included a formal presentation by ADOT regarding this alternative and the options and a presentation by the City of Phoenix regarding City planning efforts conducted for Laveen Village and potentially affected historic properties in the area.

The public meeting was attended by 209 people. Following the presentations, a question-and-answer session was held with representatives from ADOT and the City of Phoenix. An open house forum concluded the meeting, where representatives from the project team answered additional questions from the public. A number of presentation boards were displayed to provide attendees with information related to the RTP, alignment options, study process and schedule, and freeway concepts. The City of Phoenix also displayed

boards related to historic properties in the area, the City's *General Plan*, and zoning designations. Roll plots identifying the proposed R/W necessary for the 63rd and 61st Avenue Options and associated improvements were available for the public to view. Public comments were collected verbally by a court reporter and were submitted through comment forms, e-mails, and the project hotline.

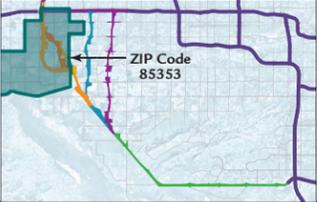
Table 6-6 summarizes the comments received during the comment period associated with the W59 Alternative Options public information meeting. Only one question about historic properties was received, namely why, if the property owner had not expressed interest in registering his or her property, were ADOT and FHWA going out of their way with the two options? The response was that evaluation of historic properties is required by law. There were 22 other comments that focused on issues such as property acquisition, status of communication with the Community, access to local streets, construction phasing, ability to add future lanes, noise impacts, and costs. Overall, meeting attendees expressed little interest in historic properties in the area.

Table 6-3 Questions and Comments Received during November 2005 Public Meeting Presentations, Phase 4

	Southwest Valley	Laveen, Estrella, and South Mountain Villages	Ahwatukee Foothills Village	General Responses
Meeting date and location	Public meeting held on November 15, 2005, at the Estrella Vista Reception Center in Avondale. The meeting was attended by 163 people.	Public meeting held on November 16, 2005, at the Corona Ranch in Laveen Village. The meeting was attended by 464 people.	Public meeting held on November 17, 2005, at the Grace Inn in Ahwatukee Foothills Village. The meeting was attended by 2,103 people.	
Concerns addressed at meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interchange locations and design and effect on local access • Purpose and need for the freeway • Concern regarding a truck bypass • Noise barriers and rubberized asphalt • Alternatives farther west of SR 101L^b • Continued residential construction in potential right-of-way without disclosure to potential buyers • Decision-making process and how the public will be involved • Status of communications with the Community • Home displacements and effect of freeway on property values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why has it taken so long and will there be enough money this time • Ongoing development—lack of disclosure and uncertainty of future • Property value impacts • SMPP^c impacts • How decision will be made and when • Purpose of the freeway • Truck traffic and bypass • Number of relocations and acquisition process • Consideration of other options • Noise mitigation • SR 30^d location and connection to the South Mountain Freeway • Construction schedule and impacts • What happens if not built 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeway is primarily a truck bypass • Build on Community land • Right-of-way costs, determination of fair market value, and relocation process • Developers constructing new homes in corridor • Transport of hazardous materials • Why build in Ahwatukee Foothills Village if the people here don't want it and wouldn't use it • Impact on local streets during and after construction • Impact of no-build • Decision-making process and construction schedules • Noise and air pollution • Interchange locations • Purpose and need for freeway • Depressing freeway in Ahwatukee Foothills Village • Design changes since 1985–1988 proposal • Increase in crime • Impact on local schools • Type of development adjacent to freeway • Impact on property values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on businesses, air quality, noise levels, public services, and future land use as well as implications—including residential displacements—of deficiencies in disclosure of locational information regarding the proposed freeway to potential property buyers. • Communication efforts with the Community^a can be found in Chapter 2, <i>Gila River Indian Community Coordination</i>. • Consideration of alternatives on Community land can be found in Chapter 2, <i>Gila River Indian Community Coordination</i>, and Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. • Elements of the proposed action pertinent to right-of-way acquisition, construction schedule, freeway location and design (e.g., interchange design), and other planned freeway projects are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. • The relation of the proposed action to the local street network is described in Chapter 1, <i>Purpose and Need</i>, and in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. • The purpose and need for the proposed action are presented in Chapter 1, <i>Purpose and Need</i>. • The No-Action Alternative and its impacts are discussed in Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5. • Impacts on SMPP are presented in Chapter 5, <i>Section 4(f) Evaluation</i>.

^a Gila River Indian Community ^b State Route 101L (Loop 101) ^c Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve ^d State Route 30 (proposed)

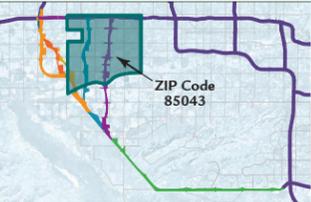
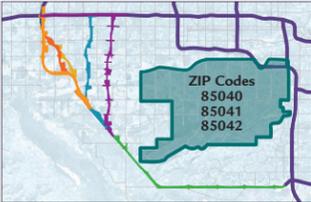
Table 6-4 Summary of Public Comments, Phase 4

Public Comment/ Question	Avondale, Buckeye, and Goodyear	Tolleson Area (85353)	General Responses
	<p>Twenty-three comments were received from residents in the Avondale, Buckeye, and Goodyear area</p>	<p>ZIP Code 85353 includes Tolleson and several new residential developments south of Tolleson within the city of Phoenix. During Phase 4, 149 comments were received from residents within this ZIP Code.</p> 	
<p>1. Reasons for supporting construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need traffic congestion relief • Reduce congestion • Already voted for it • I-10^c traffic too heavy • Need to relieve west side surface streets • Alternate route around downtown • Access for East and West Valley commuters • Most large cities have ring roads • Need more freeways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growth warrants such a freeway • Traffic has increased—east-west travel is nearly impossible • Alleviate I-10 congestion • Need to complete outer loop • No other alternative to ease traffic • Needed for regional traffic • Eliminate congestion of traffic through downtown • Years behind in building future roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on businesses, air quality, noise levels, public services, and future land use as well as implications—including residential displacements—of deficiencies in disclosure of locational information regarding the proposed freeway to potential property buyers. • Consideration of alternatives on Community^a land can be found in Chapter 2, <i>Gila River Indian Community Coordination</i>, and Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. • Elements of the proposed action pertinent to right-of-way acquisition, construction schedule, cost, freeway location and design (e.g., interchange design), and other planned freeway projects are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. • Consideration of other alternatives, such as light rail or the use of Broadway Road as the freeway alignment, was made as part of the environmental impact statement process. Conclusions relative to such alternatives are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<p>2. Reasons for opposing construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't live near freeway • Facility relocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home in jeopardy; displaces my family • Proposals are incomplete • Will not alleviate enough I-10 traffic to offset cost • Millions of dollars in economic development will be lost • East-west highway paralleling I-10 is a greater need • Need mass transit, not more freeways • Property values will drop • Air and noise pollution • Farther west will better serve the communities • Impact on schools • Destroying a lifestyle and major businesses • Affects my place of work • Tolleson too small for a freeway 	
<p>3. Most important issues to consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced congestion • Impacts on community • Cost <p>In addition to supporting the construction of the freeway, residents in Avondale, Buckeye, and Goodyear supported the W101 Alternative and Options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on community • Environmental impacts • Reduced congestion <p>Responders from the 85353 ZIP Code preferred the W55 Alternative or any alternative not in Tolleson.</p>	
<p>4. Other comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just widen existing roads. • Minimum number of lanes should be six to eight at build-out. • Hurry, make a decision and get to building. • Build SR 303L^d before too many more houses are built. • Neglected West for too many years; accelerate construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more information on method of compensation for homes and businesses. • Why were we never informed of this possibility by our builders? • Spend more money on light rail. • Don't need this freeway; improve existing freeways. • Would mar the beauty of the South Mountains. • Consider what alternative schools have with less land to work with in Tolleson. • Tolleson is too small to have another highway cut through the town. • Give it to Phoenix; it wants it. • Major impact on Tolleson's wastewater treatment plant. • Think about the toll on families. • People of Farmington Fields will be put into poverty with the addition of this freeway. • Freeways are often not the best solutions to traffic problems. • Make Broadway Road a highway connecting to US 60.^e • Widen I-10 before starting another bad freeway. • Spend money on trolley or subway. • Delay of constructing freeway has caused congestion that is horrendous. • Why not build a freeway above existing freeways? • It's needed, let's hurry and build. • Why build new houses and then demolish them? • I support the construction but not in our backyard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The No-Action Alternative and its impacts are discussed in Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5. • Impacts on SMPP^b are presented in Chapter 5, <i>Section 4(f) Evaluation</i>. • Chapter 1, <i>Purpose and Need</i>, addresses the intent of the proposed action to relieve freeway and surface street congestion, serve regional travel needs based on projected growth in the region, and optimize the regional freeway system operation.

^a Gila River Indian Community ^b Phoenix South Mountain Park/Preserve ^c Interstate 10 ^d State Route 303 (Loop 303) ^e U.S. Route 60 (Superstition Freeway)

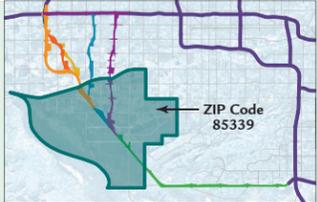
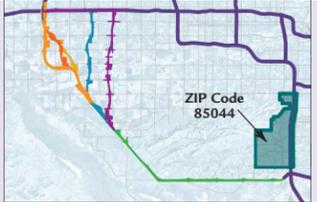
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Table 6-4 Summary of Public Comments, Phase 4 (continued)

Public Comment/ Question	Estrella Village (85043)	South Mountain Village (85040/85041/85042)	General Responses
	<p>ZIP Code 85043 includes the city of Phoenix's Estrella Village. Thirty-nine comments were received from this ZIP Code.</p> 	<p>ZIP Codes 85040, 85041, and 85042 are outside of the Study Area, but represent the opinions of residents in the city of Phoenix's South Mountain Village. Thirty-three comments were received from this area.</p> 	
<p>1. Reasons for supporting construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area needs traffic congestion relief on surface streets and I-10 Population is increasing; need to reduce congestion Easier access south of the South Mountains Traffic will get better and result in shorter commute times Traffic congestion is getting worse on a daily basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without the freeway, we will be at gridlock Reduce congestion Ease of transportation around Phoenix area Rapid growth; additional freeways needed For a city to grow, it must have highways Need to get to work Good for urban modernization Relieve heavy truck traffic on 51st Avenue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graceful way to get to East Valley, where wife and I work Relieve pressure on secondary roads Relieve I-10 Reduce congestion on I-10 out of Ahwatukee Foothills Village Relieve congestion through central Phoenix Add transportation corridor for Southwest Valley West side needs better freeways
<p>2. Reasons for opposing construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No real traffic need Can't afford to sell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We don't want it, so forget it Home would be torn down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Population growth will require new transportation infrastructure
<p>3. Most important issues to consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on neighborhood Reduced congestion <p>Although residents in this area support construction of the freeway, they are divided on what is the appropriate location, with almost equal numbers preferring the W55 Alternative and the W101 Alternative and Options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce congestion Impacts on neighborhood <p>Almost half of the South Mountain Village residents preferred construction of the W55 Alternative and about one-third preferred the W101 Alternative and Options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental impacts Environmental impact
<p>4. Other comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be one (alternative) that has least negative effect on current residents' lives. Felt we were kept in the dark until it is too late. Rush it through; we need it. Stay off I-10. Widen I-10. Rather go through my house than next to it; don't mind being bought out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make decision on the best and real traffic benefit, not some compromise. Businesses can be relocated a lot easier than 1,300 homes. W71 Alternative is a bad idea. Even the No-Action Alternative will affect a large number of people. Build with carpool lanes from beginning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delay final decision until an option on the Community can be included. Southwest Phoenix is only area without freeway; it's our turn. Can't wait; start now. Devaluation of property if purchased. Shouldn't take 2 years to make decision.

(continued on next page)

Table 6-4 Summary of Public Comments, Phase 4 (continued)

Public Comment/ Question	Laveen Village (85339)	Ahwatukee Foothills Village (85044)	General Responses
	<p>ZIP Code 85339 includes not only Laveen Village in the city of Phoenix, but also portions of the Community. Responses were received from 149 people within this ZIP Code.</p> 	<p>ZIP Code 85044 is generally outside of the Study Area and includes the Ahwatukee Foothills Village residents living adjacent to I-10. Responses were received from 139 residents from this area.</p> 	
<p>1. Reasons for supporting construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alleviate traffic and congestion due to growth Need freeway through this area and outside More freeways to relieve congestion on local streets Continue to develop Laveen Village Either build it now or later; we will need it Bypass for interstate traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued economic expansion of Phoenix area Completion of SR 202L^e Voters approved Will help my daily driving and home values Southwest Valley needs transportation alternatives Traffic situation has become hazardous on Baseline Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on businesses, air quality, noise levels, public services, and future land use as well as implications—including residential displacements—of deficiencies in disclosure of locational information regarding the proposed freeway to potential property buyers. Chapter 1, <i>Purpose and Need</i>, addresses the intent of the proposed action to relieve freeway and surface street congestion, improve projected travel times, serve regional travel needs (including those outside Maricopa County) based on projected growth in the region, and optimize the regional freeway system operation.
<p>2. Reasons for opposing construction</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens misplaced Moved to get away from city Disruption of neighborhood, destruction of the mountains Why pay for poor planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise Pollution OK with traffic jams Pecos Road OK as is Doesn't help daily traffic Will have blighted neighborhood Foothills Village crime Property value loss Negative impact on Ahwatukee Foothills Village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not needed; no purpose Have enough freeways; need more open space Destroy cycling route No road through the South Mountains Displaced homes Cost Truck traffic Additional traffic on local streets Need mass transit instead of freeways
<p>3. Most important issues to consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce congestion Impacts on community Environmental impacts <p>During the Laveen Barbeque, staff conducted an informal poll of 100 people who stopped to discuss the freeway project. Of those who expressed an opinion, 48 percent preferred the W101 Alternative and Options and 29 percent supported the W55 Alternative. However, of the 149 people who submitted comment forms and sent e-mails, preference for the W55 Alternative was slightly more (4 percent) than those who preferred the W101 Alternative and Options.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on community Reduced congestion Environmental impacts <p>Of those respondents who indicated a preference, almost half (47 percent) preferred an alignment on Community land. Another 40 percent indicated preferences for the E1, W101, and W55 Alternatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of the proposed action pertinent to right-of-way acquisition, construction schedule, cost, freeway location, design, access, and other planned freeway projects are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. The chapter includes discussion regarding the status of the preferred alternative in relation to alignments in the Western and Eastern Sections. Traffic vehicle mix that would use the proposed action includes trucks. Discussion in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents truck traffic-related issues.
<p>4. Other comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This whole thing stinks. Wasting State money. Please do not build. Laveen Village is one of the few pristine communities left. Sad to see all our farmland taken away. Please consider depressed freeway as much as possible. Let's get it done. Businesses and homeowners need final route as quickly as possible. Please listen to us. We knew freeway would go through home when we bought it. Air and noise quality is definitely a big concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choose the least destructive route. Hypocritical of City of Phoenix to argue 20-year plan alignment is not appropriate for Ahwatukee Foothills Village but we must adopt same plan on west side because that has always been the plan. I admire the fact your team would invest so much time and effort into grasping public opinion. Not building freeway is not a viable option. No exit at 51st Avenue. Please don't allow people in Ahwatukee Foothills Village to dictate what others want. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like the I-10 (Maricopa Freeway) project. No access ramps to the Community if built on Pecos Road. If it goes through, I will move. People in Ahwatukee Foothills Village will not let you do this. A decision has to be negotiated now—don't leave us in limbo.

^e State Route 202L (Loop 202)

Table 6-4 Summary of Public Comments, Phase 4 (continued)

Public Comment/ Question	Ahwatukee Foothills Village (85045)		Ahwatukee Foothills Village (85048)		General Responses
	ZIP Code 85045 includes the western portion of Ahwatukee Foothills Village, where most of the current residential construction is occurring. Responses were received from 543 people in this ZIP Code. 		The southeastern section of Ahwatukee Foothills Village is located in ZIP Code 85048; 973 comments were received from this ZIP Code. 		
1. Reasons for supporting construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relieve traffic and congestion Need it to be on Community land Route is needed Anticipated growth (traffic and population) Need an alternative to I-10 Need a means to travel to the West Valley 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relieve traffic and congestion Route is needed regionally Should be on Community land Need another route out of Ahwatukee Foothills Village Population will continue to grow Bought home based on planned freeway 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on businesses, air quality, noise levels, public services, and future land use as well as implications—including residential displacements—of deficiencies in disclosure of locational information regarding the proposed freeway to potential property buyers.
2. Reasons for opposing construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on SMPP Residential displacement Freeway noise and pollution Crime Few residents would use it, just cross-country truck traffic Ruin mountain views 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruption to neighborhood and quality of life Residential displacement Impacts on SMPP Freeway noise Air pollution Crime Will increase traffic Pecos Road alignment would be too close to churches, schools, and neighborhoods Plan for Pecos Road outdated, was approved when only a few thousand residents in Ahwatukee Foothills Village Jeopardize rare vegetation and wildlife 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1, <i>Purpose and Need</i>, addresses the intent of the proposed action to relieve freeway and surface street congestion, improve projected travel times, serve regional travel needs (including those outside Maricopa County) based on projected growth in the region, and optimize the regional freeway system operation.
3. Most important issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on neighborhood Environmental impacts Other <p>Of those who expressed a preference for a specific alternative, 71 percent included a preference for an alignment on Community land, 15 percent suggested the No-Action Alternative, and 7 percent specifically stated “no alignment on Pecos Road.” Some comments included multiple preferences.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impacts on neighborhood Environmental impacts Other <p>Of those who expressed a preference for a specific alternative, 69 percent included a preference for an alignment on Community land and 12 percent suggested the No-Action Alternative. In addition, 3 percent specifically stated “no alignment on Pecos Road,” while 2 percent preferred an alignment on Pecos Road. Some comments included multiple preferences.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elements of the proposed action pertinent to right-of-way acquisition, construction schedule, cost, freeway location, design, access, and other planned freeway projects are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. The chapter includes discussion regarding the status of the preferred alternative in relation to alignments in the Western and Eastern Sections.
4. Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don’t build the freeway and ruin a wonderful community! Building permits were issued as little as a year ago for houses to be demolished according to proposed routes. If it can’t be built on Community land or farther south, don’t build it! Who is this freeway for anyway? It certainly does not serve the people of Ahwatukee Foothills Village. If it needs to be built, please at least put it below ground. It would be better to have NO freeway at all than to devalue our community. Give the Community what it wants . . . more \$\$\$! I’m concerned about a drop in value of my home based on outcome of study. It is a 20-year-old plan that doesn’t work today. Why not propose a toll road to the Community? Keep negotiating with the Community on using its unused land. Seems like the Community would want traffic to run by its gambling facilities. If the Community does not allow placing the roadway on its property, then obviously there will be no exits built leading to its property. Why not develop a true Phoenix bypass—Gila Bend–Buckeye? Build it! 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Either build on Community or don’t build it at all. This freeway needs to be built below ground level. Negotiate such that it is a win-win situation for both the Community and our neighborhood. The plan is out-of-date and does not reflect the current situation. Don’t destroy Ahwatukee Foothills Village and SMPP just to enable more urban sprawl! What about Riggs or Maricopa roads? Property values will decline; crime will increase. Why did you let builders build on land you knew about in 1988? I don’t believe there is a large benefit to the neighborhood that will be disrupted. This is primarily a bypass route for truckers. Move the process faster. Unfortunately, I think the South Mountain Freeway is a necessity to handle future traffic patterns. I’ve lived here for 18 years and anticipated it being built! There are lots of silent people who would like to have the freeway built. Right now probably you only hear voices from those who are against the plan. Please do not pressure the Community. It deserves its land. Let it decide without pressure. A ground-level highway with walls would ruin the views of the Sierra Estrella for many residents. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic vehicle mix that would use the proposed action includes trucks. Discussion in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents truck traffic-related issues. Consideration of alternatives on Community land can be found in Chapter 2, <i>Gila River Indian Community Coordination</i>, and Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. Consideration of other alternatives, such as light rail or the use of Broadway Road as the freeway alignment, was made as part of the environmental impact statement process. Conclusions relative to such alternatives are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. The No-Action Alternative and its impacts are discussed in Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5. Impacts on SMPP are presented in Chapter 5, <i>Section 4(f) Evaluation</i>.

Table 6-4 Summary of Public Comments, Phase 4 (continued)

Public Comment/ Question	Northwest Valley	Southeast Valley	Northeast Valley	General Responses		
	The Northwest Valley includes communities such as Glendale, Peoria, and North Phoenix. Twenty-four comments were received from this area.	The Southeast Valley—consisting of Tempe, Chandler, and Gilbert—generated 37 comments.	Twenty-one comments were received from the Northeast Valley, which includes the communities of Scottsdale and northeast Phoenix.			
1. Reasons for supporting construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needed; downtown traffic congestion has to be relieved • Live on west side and travel to Southeast Valley weekly • Obvious link between East and West valleys; without regional freeway, the existing system in between would be overtaxed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need access from Southeast to West Valley • Ease future growth and congestion • Necessary to overall freeway system • I-10 can't carry the SR 202L traffic if not built • Greater good for the 3.7 million residents vs. 250 homes displaced • Existing freeways will be parking lots without this freeway • Part of complete RTP^f 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important link for Chandler/Gilbert/Ahwatukee Foothills Village to get to West Valley events • We must move forward and build it • Help truck traffic avoid downtown • Solution to future traffic problem • Need more freeways to accommodate growth • Would reduce commute and save time/gas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional mobility • Growth; need in West Valley • Traffic better today than 30–40 years ago without freeways • Complete necessary part of transportation plan • Need to remain ahead of growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce traffic congestion • Citizens need and deserve best possible freeway system • South Valley is booming; we need it • I'm paying for it • Regionwide traffic improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on businesses, air quality, noise levels, public services, and future land use as well as implications—including residential displacements—of deficiencies in disclosure of locational information regarding the proposed freeway to potential property buyers. • Chapter 1, <i>Purpose and Need</i>, addresses the intent of the proposed action to relieve freeway and surface street congestion, improve projected travel times, serve regional travel needs (including those outside Maricopa County) based on projected growth in the region, and optimize the regional freeway system operations. • Elements of the proposed action pertinent to right-of-way acquisition, construction schedule, cost, freeway location, design, access, and other planned freeway projects are presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>. The chapter includes discussion regarding the status of the preferred alternative in relation to alignments in the Western and Eastern Sections. • Traffic vehicle mix that would use the proposed action includes trucks. Discussion in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents truck traffic-related issues. • The No-Action Alternative and its impacts are discussed in Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 5.
2. Reasons for opposing construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not going to help • Affects friend's house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displace too many homes and businesses • Damage environment • Potential for commercial development south of Ahwatukee Foothills Village • Pollution and noise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unacceptable alignment • Disrupt Ahwatukee Foothills Village • Work on roads we already have and on light rail extension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hate freeways • Won't help Interstate 17 and Deck Park Tunnel (I-10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will turn I-10 into a mess • Too costly 	
3. Most important issues to consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on neighborhood • Reduced congestion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced congestion • Impacts on neighborhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced congestion • Impacts on neighborhood 		
	For those who indicated a preference, 42 percent preferred the W101 Alternative and Options and about 30 percent preferred the W55 Alternative.	Area residents were somewhat split in their alignment preferences, with 40 percent preferring the W101 Alternative and Options and 32 percent wanting an alignment on Community land.	Almost half (49 percent) of the respondents favored the W101 Alternative and Options and about one third (33 percent) preferred the W55 Alternative.			
4. Other comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The W71 Alternative is a total surprise and should be abandoned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No access from the Community if not allowed to build on its land. • Don't need to tie west Phoenix with Gilbert. • Please build. • Don't let small number of people say it is not necessary, because it is. • Buy house now. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent presentation; impressed with layout and number of people able to answer questions (Laveen Village) • Put HOV^g lanes in from the start. • Reservation is made up of people just like other side of street: we don't want it either. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve the west side sooner for our peace of mind. • Regardless of alignment, build it soon. • Post signs to identify potential alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It takes 2 hours, sometimes, to go from West Valley to East Valley. 	

^f Regional Transportation Plan ^g high-occupancy vehicle

Table 6-5 Additional Phase 4 Comments Received during and after the February 2010 Public Meeting

Concerns	General Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to add future lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The configuration of the proposed action is presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality, traffic, and noise impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on air quality and noise levels. Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents traffic information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment shift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of the proposed action pertinent to freeway design can be found in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative design details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents details regarding the design of the action alternatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood and business impacts and effects on property values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on adjacent neighborhoods, businesses, and property values are discussed in Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, and in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern regarding truck traffic and a truck bypass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents information regarding truck traffic and the CANAMEX Corridor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction phasing and schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of the proposed action pertinent to the construction phasing and schedule can be found in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with adjacent projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of the proposed action with other projects is addressed in Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, and in Chapter 6, <i>Comments and Coordination</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with Union Pacific Railroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding the railroad is presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs related to utilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A discussion of costs related to the proposed action and utilities is presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents information regarding the alternatives analysis and outcome.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of the alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents information regarding the alternatives development process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on access to local streets during and after construction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on local streets are discussed in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on local schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts relating to local schools can be found in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, and Chapter 5, <i>Section 4(f) Evaluation</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property acquisition and relocation assistance information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents information regarding residential displacements, relocation assistance, and disclosure of location information regarding the proposed freeway.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comments with regard to alternatives and final decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public comments are addressed in Chapter 6, <i>Comments and Coordination</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific property concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents information regarding residential and business impacts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of communications with the Community^a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication efforts with the Community are presented in Chapter 2, <i>Gila River Indian Community Coordination</i>.

^a Gila River Indian Community

Table 6-6 Additional Phase 4 Comments Received during and after the February 2011 Public Meeting

Concerns	General Responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of future lanes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The configuration of the proposed freeway is presented in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment shift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elements of the proposed action pertinent to freeway design can be found in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative alignment preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, provides information about the different alignment options.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents details regarding the cost of the action alternatives.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and neighborhood impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts on neighborhoods and businesses are discussed in Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, and in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction phasing and schedule 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the construction phasing and schedule can be found in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with the Community^a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination efforts with the Community are presented in Chapter 2, <i>Gila River Indian Community Coordination</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current and future zoning and development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents information regarding zoning, land use, and future development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents information regarding the alternatives development process.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drainage impacts are presented in Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents information regarding economic impacts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic properties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic properties are addressed in Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, and Chapter 5, <i>Section 4(f) Evaluation</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents information regarding the alternatives analysis and outcome.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multimodal options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of multimodal alternatives, such as light rail, is discussed in Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise and air quality impacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents impacts on noise levels and air quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-of-way acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents information regarding residential displacements, relocation assistance, and disclosure of location information regarding the proposed freeway.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of EIS^b 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study schedule and timeline are provided in the <i>Summary</i> chapter and in Chapter 6, <i>Comments and Coordination</i>.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4, <i>Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation</i>, presents information regarding Title VI.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3, <i>Alternatives</i>, presents traffic information.

^a Gila River Indian Community ^b environmental impact statement

Phase 5 – DEIS

The agency and public outreach program for the DEIS phase (April 2013 to July 2013) was developed to maximize opportunities for agencies and the public to review and provide comments on the DEIS, maintaining compliance with NEPA requirements. Goals of the outreach program for the DEIS included:

- ▶ engage a broad, representative cross section of the public to help ensure the FEIS reflects and incorporates agency and public input
- ▶ provide clear and accurate information that encourages informed participation and input
- ▶ provide multiple means through which agencies and the public could learn about the study
- ▶ provide multiple, convenient ways for interested parties to provide comments
- ▶ document input accurately
- ▶ meet NEPA requirements

The Notice of Availability was published in the *Federal Register* on April 26, 2013, to inform agencies and the public the DEIS was available for public review and comment. The publication served as the beginning of

the 90-day comment period (the minimum requirement under NEPA is 45 days). Interested agencies received letters with compact discs of the DEIS and appendices and the DEIS was made available online at <azdot.gov/southmountainfreeway>. ADOT issued a press release, and electronic versions of the DEIS were distributed to federal, State, local, and tribal agencies. Hard copies were made available for viewing at the ADOT EPG office in addition to four libraries throughout the Study Area. Copies of the DEIS were available for purchase at a local FedEx Office.

The outreach program had four main components:

- ▶ awareness campaign
- ▶ public hearing
- ▶ online public hearing
- ▶ community forums

Each of these main components is summarized below. Full details on the outreach program and its implementation are provided in *South Mountain Freeway Summary Report: Public Involvement for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (see Appendix 6-4 beginning on page A795).

Through these public outreach components, as well as a study hotline and Web site available throughout the 90-day comment period, members of the public and other stakeholders or interested parties could submit comments in a variety of formats:

- ▶ Comment forms (in English and Spanish) were available at the public hearing and community forums.
- ▶ Written comments could be submitted by mail or in person.
- ▶ Court reporters accepted comments from the public at the public hearing and community forums.
- ▶ Telephone comments could be left on the study hotline.
- ▶ E-mail comments could be sent to the study e-mail address.
- ▶ Public testimony could be provided at the 10-hour public hearing.

Awareness Campaign

Given the complexity, importance, and level of public interest in the DEIS, a key component of the public outreach process was providing detailed information to members of the public—before release of the DEIS—about how they could participate in the DEIS review and comment process. This campaign began 30 days prior to the DEIS release and focused on informing the public of the upcoming DEIS release and described opportunities for participation and input (see Table 6-7).

Public Hearing

The public hearing for the DEIS was held on May 21, 2013, at the Phoenix Convention Center from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. The public hearing’s main purposes were to present findings of the DEIS and to obtain public testimony or comment on the DEIS. Notification for this event was distributed in the following ways:

- ▶ media alert
- ▶ press releases
- ▶ direct mail to approximately 87,000 residences and businesses in the Study Area

Table 6-7 Public Awareness Campaign Components, Phase 5

Component	Benefit
Fact Sheet	Created to give an overview of the South Mountain Freeway study and how the public could participate. It was posted on the ADOT ^a Web site and was available at information booths at various community events.
How to Participate Handout	Developed to focus on public input opportunities available during the 90-day DEIS ^b comment period, specifically highlighting the day-long public hearing.
How to Participate Video	Produced to explain the importance of public involvement for the South Mountain Freeway study, emphasizing the need for public input on the DEIS and noting that comments submitted could affect the final project design and outcome.
Awareness Campaign Events	Prior to release of the DEIS, ADOT attended community events or distributed information at public locations to increase awareness of the impending DEIS release and to provide information about how to participate in the DEIS review and comment process.
Elected Official and Key Stakeholder Briefings	Provided opportunities for local, State, and federal officials to be briefed on the DEIS. These briefings described the proposed freeway and gave an overview of public input and comment opportunities.

^a Arizona Department of Transportation ^b Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Outreach to the Gila River Indian Community during the DEIS Public Review Period

Leading up to the release of the DEIS, the project team communicated regularly with the Community’s Communications and Public Affairs Office (CPAO) and the Community Manager’s Office regarding the availability of project-related informational materials and the public outreach plan for the DEIS.

Consistent with the protocol for other project-related coordination with the Community (see page 2-4), the communication related to the DEIS was conducted at a “government-to-government” level. The CPAO informed ADOT that all communication and distribution of informational materials on Community land would be handled by the CPAO (see Appendix 6-5 for more information related to communications between ADOT and the CPAO regarding outreach to Community members).

In accordance with this direction, ADOT met with the Transportation Technical Team (TTT) on April 30, 2013, to present the public outreach plan for the DEIS. Community organizations represented at the meeting included the TTT, Governor’s Office, Community Manager’s Office, CPAO, and Community Department of Transportation (see

Chapter 2 for more information related to these organizations). At the meeting, the Community was given the following materials for distribution to Community members:

- *How to Participate* video
- *Fact Sheet* handout
- *How to Participate* handout
- public hearing notification ads
- hard copies and compact discs of the DEIS

During the April 30 TTT meeting, the Community Manager’s Office requested that a forum be conducted on Community land following the public hearing. ADOT agreed to this request, and a forum was held on June 22, 2013, at the Komatke Boys and Girls Club in District 6 of the Community.

The CPAO was responsible for making the *Fact Sheet*, *How to Participate* handout, and DEIS hard copies available at all District Service Centers, the Ira H. Hayes Memorial Library, all elder meetings, the Urban Members Association meeting, and at the offices of the CPAO. The CPAO was also responsible for placing notifications for the public hearing and forum in the *Gila River Indian News*.

- newspaper display notices in the *Ahwatukee Foothills News*, *Arizona Informant*, *Arizona Republic*, *East Valley Tribune*, *La Voz*, and *West Valley View*
- Web site banner ads displayed by the *Ahwatukee Foothills News*, *Arizona Republic*, *West Valley View*, and the *East Valley Tribune*
- radio advertising with 25 spots each on KESZ-FM, KMXP-FM, KNIX-FM, KGME-AM, and KFYI-AM

To optimize the opportunity for public participation and, in particular, participation from identified Title VI populations, ADOT offered free shuttle bus service to and from the public hearing located at the Phoenix Convention Center. Service was provided throughout the day (morning, noon, and evening trips) to and from



Public hearing, May 2013

91st Avenue and Van Buren Street, 59th Avenue and I-10, Laveen Southern Ridge Golf Club, Komatke Boys and Girls Club, Community Governance Center in Sacaton, and the 40th Street Park-and-Ride lot.

Additionally, parking vouchers and transit passes were provided at the public hearing for participants who drove or used transit services to attend the public hearing.

During the day-long public hearing, participants had the opportunity to watch a video describing the study, review study information, talk to project team members, and provide comments. Project team members were stationed throughout the convention center meeting rooms to answer questions and offer assistance.

Participation levels were recorded as follows:

- 500 people attended the public hearing (estimated)
- 300 people signed in
- 40 registration cards were submitted
- 117 people spoke before a panel of project team members
- 206 people provided verbal comments to court reporters
- 83 comment cards were submitted
- 10 letters were submitted
- 2 petitions were submitted (one with 237 signatures and one with 287)

Online Public Hearing

For those who could not attend the public hearing, an alternative was available through the online public hearing Web site. The Web site went live at 10 a.m. on May 21, 2013, at <azdot.gov/southmountainfreeway> and linked to <smfonlinehearing.com>. All the materials presented at the public hearing—including the study video, display banners, aerial maps, an interactive PDF version of the DEIS, and an online comment form—were available through the online public hearing. A summary of online public hearing participation is presented in Table 6-8.

The online public hearing also featured a welcome video explaining the format of the online public hearing, an overview of its purpose, and information about how to provide comments. Comment forms were removed from the online public hearing at the end of the DEIS comment period; the Web site, however, remained live to provide materials and information until May 2014, at which time the materials were moved to the ADOT project Web site: <azdot.gov/southmountainfreeway>.

Community Forums

Following the public hearing, six community forums were held in the Estrella, Laveen, and Ahwatukee Foothills villages of Phoenix; within the Community; and in Chandler and Avondale:

- June 4, 2013, Sunridge Elementary School, 6244 W. Roosevelt Street, Phoenix, 4–7 p.m.

Table 6-8 Online Public Hearing Participation, Phase 5

Component	Level of Participation
Total people who visited the site	1,864
Average number of pages viewed, per visit	2.63
Average visit duration (minutes:seconds)	3:55
Online comments received	314
E-mail comments received	788

- ▶ June 18, 2013, The Foothills Golf Club, 2201 E. Clubhouse Drive, Phoenix, 4–7 p.m.
- ▶ June 22, 2013, Komatke Boys & Girls Club, 5047 W. Pecos Road, Gila River Indian Community, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
- ▶ June 25, 2013, Windmill Suites, 3535 W. Chandler Boulevard, Chandler, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.
- ▶ July 9, 2013, Laveen Education Center, 5001 W. Dobbins Road, Laveen, 4–7 p.m.
- ▶ July 11, 2013, Hilton Garden Inn Phoenix/Avondale, 11460 W. Hilton Way, Avondale, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

These forums provided a more informal opportunity to learn about the DEIS. Attendees could watch the study video, view study materials, and talk to project team members. Court reporters were available to take individual verbal comments with no time limit, and written comments could also be submitted.

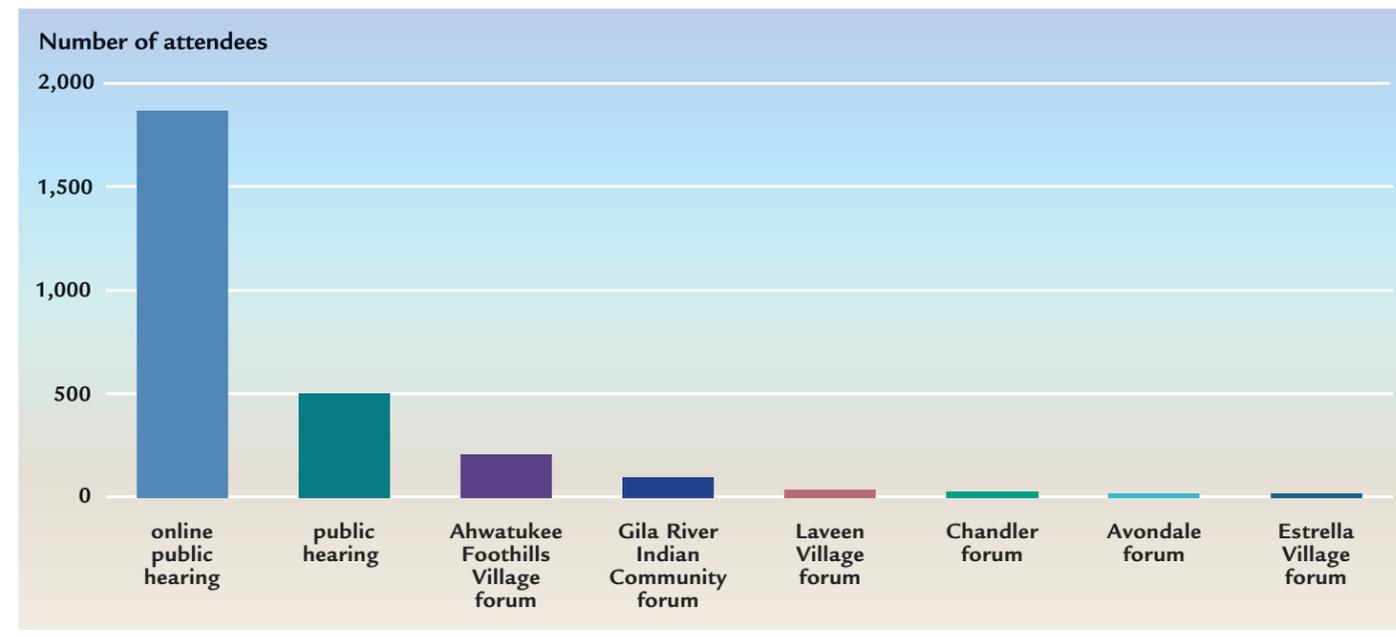
Summary of Phase 5 Public Involvement

Public involvement during the DEIS 90-day public comment period included participation by 1) attending the public hearing or community forums, 2) viewing the online public hearing, or 3) reviewing the DEIS and submitting a comment. Approximately 900 people attended one of the public events held during the comment period. Almost 1,900 unique visitors viewed information



Community forum, June 2013

Figure 6-5 Public Involvement, Phase 5

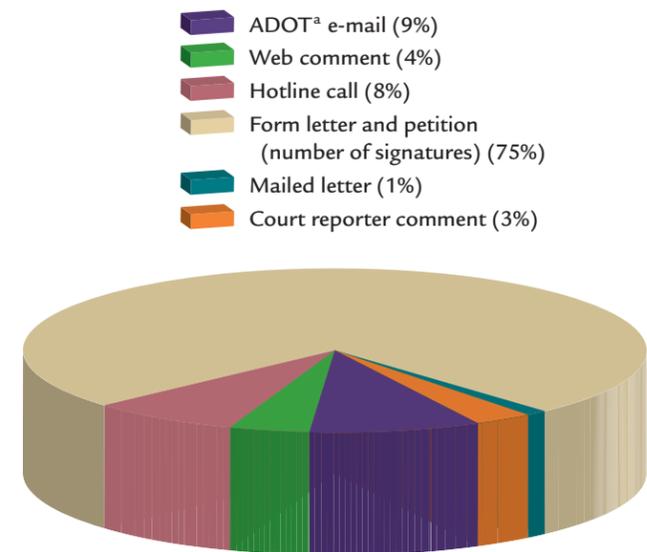


Almost 1,900 people participated in the online public hearing. About 900 attended the public hearing or one of the forums in person.

from the online hearing (see Table 6-8). Figure 6-5 shows the number of people participating in the public events and online hearing. The project team received 8,201 comments from federal, State, local, and tribal agencies; special interest groups; businesses; and members of the public (see Figure 6-6 for a breakdown of the comments by submittal method). When combined, over 10,000 people participated in the DEIS phase through one or more of the public involvement methods available.

Comments received on the DEIS were reviewed by the project team and categorized according to the topic addressed (air quality, alternatives, noise, etc.). Responses to each comment were developed. Appendix 7, Volume III, documents the comments received and the responses provided.

Figure 6-6 Comments Submitted, Phase 5



^a Arizona Department of Transportation

A large majority of comments (75 percent) were submitted through form letters or petitions.

How has public input influenced the project?

From initial suggestions of topics and issues for project team focus to alignments to consider to measures that could be taken to minimize project impacts, the public has contributed critical and timely insights that have served to focus scarce analytical resources and to enhance the quality both of the evaluations and of the proposed action:

- contributed more than 30 alternatives, including alternatives under study
- assisted in determining interchange locations, including shifting the proposed 51st Avenue interchange in Laveen Village and eliminating the proposed 32nd Street interchange in Ahwatukee Foothills Village
- reviewed options along Pecos Road in Ahwatukee Foothills Village
- proposed measures to minimize impacts on sensitive resources, including alignment shifts near Tolleson High School in Tolleson and SMPP in Laveen Village
- provided input on locally important issues, including well locations in Ahwatukee Foothills Village, major employers, and potentially historic properties throughout the entire Study Area
- recommended alignment changes to avoid historic and/or cultural neighborhoods and locations, including alignment shifts near the Sachs-Webster Farmhouse in Laveen Village and the Santa Maria community in Estrella Village
- recommended reducing the proposed freeway's R/W needs (and, therefore, the number of residential displacements) by using an eight-lane design instead of a ten-lane one
- recommended reexamination of potential costs, impacts, and benefits of design options such as depressed roadways, tunnels, and bridges

FUTURE COORDINATION AND PROJECT ACTIONS

ADOT and FHWA will continue to seek input from the public, agencies, and jurisdictions regarding the proposed action through the EIS process and, if an action alternative were to be selected in the record of decision (ROD), through the design phase and construction. ADOT and FHWA will continue to encourage the Community to recommend alternatives to study on Community land for the eastern portion of the proposed action. Efforts to date in this regard are discussed in the section, *Content and Status of Coordination and Activities*, on page 2-10 in Chapter 2, *Gila River Indian Community Coordination*.

EIS PROCESS

The public, agencies, and jurisdictions will have the opportunity to review the FEIS during the review period following circulation of the FEIS and publication of its Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* (Phase 6).

Phase 6 - FEIS

Interested parties are encouraged to review the FEIS. The FEIS and associated technical reports may be viewed through the following methods:

- Electronic placement of the FEIS and technical reports at: <azdot.gov/southmountainfreeway>
- Printed copy placement of the FEIS for review only and at no charge at the following repositories throughout the Study Area:
 - Phoenix Public Library – Cesar Chavez
3635 W. Baseline Road, Laveen, AZ 85339
 - Phoenix Public Library – Desert Sage
7602 W. Encanto Boulevard, Phoenix, AZ 85035
 - Phoenix Public Library – Ironwood
4333 E. Chandler Boulevard, Phoenix, AZ 85048
 - Phoenix Public Library – Burton Barr
1221 N. Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85004
 - Chandler Sunset Library
4930 W. Ray Road, Chandler, AZ 85226
 - Sam Garcia Western Avenue Library
495 E. Western Avenue, Avondale, AZ 85323

- Tolleson West Public Library
9555 W. Van Buren Street, Tolleson, AZ 85353
- Tempe Public Library
3500 S. Rural Road, Tempe, AZ 85282
- Gila River Indian Community District 1 Service Center
15747 N. Shegoi Road, Coolidge, AZ 85128
- Gila River Indian Community District 2 Service Center
9239 W. Sacaton Flats Road, Sacaton, AZ 85147
- Gila River Indian Community District 3 Service Center
31 N. Church Street, Sacaton, AZ 85147
- Gila River Indian Community District 4 Service Center
1510 W. Santan Street, Sacaton, AZ 85147
- Gila River Indian Community District 5 Service Center
3456 W. Casa Blanca Road, Bapchule, AZ 85121
- Gila River Indian Community District 6 Service Center
5230 W. St. Johns Road, Laveen, AZ 85339
- Gila River Indian Community District 7 Service Center
8201 W. Baseline Road, Laveen, AZ 85339
- Ira Hayes Library
94 N. Church Street, Sacaton, AZ 85147
- Gila River Indian Community Communications and Public Affairs Office
525 W. Gu U Ki Road, Sacaton, Arizona 85147
- Printed copy placement, by appointment, at:
ADOT EPG, 1611 W. Jackson Street, Phoenix, (602) 712-7767
- Compact discs are available at no charge and can be obtained by request by calling (602) 712-7767.
- Printed copies of the FEIS and related documents are available for purchase upon request by calling (602) 712-7767. Prices for a printed copy are:
FEIS/Section 4(f) Evaluation \$125
Appendices \$50
Technical Reports \$15 to \$185

- All or parts of the FEIS are available for the cost of printing at the FedEx Office Print & Ship Center, 4940 E. Ray Road, Phoenix.
- Notice of document publication will be accomplished through:
 - Publication in the *Federal Register*
 - Direct mail and/or e-mail notice. Notice will be provided to all participants who provided an address or e-mail during the public involvement process for the project. Direct mail will be used for key agencies.
 - Advertisement of FEIS availability in local newspapers of wide distribution.
- Following its publication, a 60-day public review period for the FEIS will be provided.
- Comments can be submitted through the following methods:
 - E-mailing comments to projects@azdot.gov
 - Mail to:
South Mountain Freeway Project Team
Arizona Department of Transportation
1655 W. Jackson Street, MD 126F
Phoenix, AZ 85007
- On August 29, 2014, ADOT hand-delivered a letter to the Community's Transportation Technical Team describing the project team's desire for guidance from the Community on how to best accommodate communication with Community members, specifically related to comments received during the DEIS process regarding oral tradition of the Community (see Appendix 6-6). The letter proposed conducting a forum for Community members, in partnership with the Community, during the 60-day FEIS review period. The forum would include opportunity for oral testimony. To allow sufficient time to prepare for such a forum, the letter requested a response to the proposal by September 19, 2014. If the Community indicates by that date that they would like to accept the proposal, the project team will work with the Community to plan the details

of the forum, including date, time, location, and format. Times and locations of the potential forum will be posted at <azdot.gov/southmountainfreeway> and published in newspapers and local publications.

Record of Decision

After *Federal Register* publication and after considering any comments received, FHWA will issue a ROD. The ROD will identify the Selected Alternative for the proposed action. Mitigation measures presented in the FEIS would become formal ADOT commitments (if an action alternative were to be the Selected Alternative) when published as part of the ROD.

To facilitate certainty and predictability in the transportation decision-making process and in transportation program implementation, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) establishes a restriction on the statute of limitations regarding claims with respect to FHWA actions. This restriction was modified by Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century by shortening the period by which such claims must be filed. Part A of Section 6002 makes clear that FHWA may publish a notice in the *Federal Register*, pursuant to 23 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 139(l), indicating that it and the cooperating federal agencies have

taken a final action regarding the decision-making process for the proposed action. This final action (in the case of the proposed action, a ROD) is with respect to all issues that have been addressed under the NEPA process, such as project alternatives, potential environmental effects of the proposed action, and the avoidance and minimization of impacts. Claims seeking judicial review of the FHWA action will be barred unless such claims are filed within 150 days after the date of publication of the notice regarding the statute of limitations for the proposed action. If no notice is published, then the period that otherwise would be provided by the federal laws governing such claims applies (typically 6 years).

DESIGN PHASE

ADOT would engage the public during design of the proposed action to address specific design-related issues. For projects like the proposed freeway, ADOT, in the past, has held advertised public meetings to present design details—particularly to show where the freeway would be located, its profile, service traffic interchange configurations, noise barrier locations, and architectural treatments. Examples of this type of interaction can be found throughout Chapter 4, *Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation*.

CONSTRUCTION

During construction, ADOT typically holds information meetings at the beginning of construction activities regarding the upcoming improvements and work schedules. The public can be informed through construction updates/newsletters, project information hotlines, Web sites, periodic meetings, project offices, and radio and newspaper advertising.

POSTCONSTRUCTION

ADOT would be responsive to the general public relative to operational issues. As an example, ADOT would respond to complaints regarding traffic-generated noise by monitoring postconstruction noise on request, as considered on a case-by-case basis. Examples of this type of interaction can be found throughout Chapter 4, *Affected Environment, Environmental Consequences, and Mitigation*.

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS AS APPLIED TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

Public comments have been received requesting the application of the principles of context-sensitive solutions (CSS) to the EIS process and to the design of the proposed action. Before addressing the request, a brief definition of CSS, a historical overview of CSS, and a brief summary of the concept are provided.

As defined by FHWA (2007), CSS is “a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that engages all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.” The CSS approach considers the total context within which a transportation project will exist. CSS principles apply to both the process to develop the project and to the design features of the project itself.

From a historical context, CSS principles gained a foothold in the transportation industry after the Interstate Highway System was substantially completed. Around that time, transportation issues shifted from the federal level (e.g., the interstate movement of goods and people and national defense) to the state level (e.g., congestion management and system preservation of existing facilities). Involvement by community

stakeholders to preserve and enhance the human and natural environment became a central component to project implementation. Momentum for the application of CSS principles accelerated as a byproduct of a transportation industry workshop, *Thinking Beyond the Pavement: National Workshop on Integrating Highway Development with Communities and the Environment while Maintaining Safety and Performance*, held in Maryland in 1998.

FHWA and ADOT are committed to the advancement of CSS principles. FHWA’s 2003 *Performance Plan* establishes three goals—known as the “Vital Few Goals”—for the agency. One of these, “Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining,” includes an objective to incorporate CSS into agency planning and development efforts. Specifically, the objective is:

To improve the environmental quality of transportation decisionmaking, all 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Federal Lands Highway . . . Divisions will use . . .

- > Integrated approaches to multimodal planning, the environmental process and project development at a systems level; and/or
- > Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) at a project level.

The desired outcomes of CSS application are not new to the transportation industry. They have been applied to project planning and development since 1970 after passage of NEPA. Clear examples of how the application of the EIS process is directly consistent with the intent of CSS principles can be seen in Title I, *Declaration of National Environmental Policy*, alone:

The Congress authorizes and directs that, to the fullest extent possible: (1) the policies, regulations, and public laws of the United States shall be interpreted and administered in accordance with the policies set forth in this Act, and (2) all agencies of the Federal Government shall . . . utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decisionmaking which may have an impact on man’s environment. (Sec. 102 [42 U.S.C. § 4332])

Table 6-9 provides some comparisons of definitions, objectives, and outcomes of the CSS approach with the EIS process. The similarities are evident. The FEIS presents numerous process-related matters and design outcomes that exceed the intent of CSS.

Table 6-9 Application of Context-Sensitive Solutions in the EIS Process

Element of Context-Sensitive Solutions	Corresponding Element of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations	Examples within the FEIS/Comments ^a
<p><i>Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) is defined as . . . A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that engages all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility.</i>^b</p>	<p><i>NEPA urges . . . all agencies of the Federal Government shall . . . utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decisionmaking which may have an impact on man’s environment. [42 U.S.C. § 4332]</i></p>	<p>Text beginning on page 3-1 highlights an example of the interdisciplinary, collaborative approach undertaken. Text beginning on page 3-62 presents the systematic, interdisciplinary approach used in the alternatives screening process.</p>
<p>CSS is an approach that considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist.^b</p>	<p><i>NEPA provides guidance on determining the significance of a facility’s impact by defining the context in which the impact would occur and by the impact’s intensity. The significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts and, therefore, an impact will vary with the setting of the proposed action. Intensity refers to the severity of impact (40 C.F.R. Part 1508.27). Further, NEPA establishes mitigation of impacts to include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action. • Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation. • Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment. • Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action. • Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments. [40 C.F.R. Part 1508.20] 	<p>A CSS in which the features of the proposed action are designed so that the facility “fits” into its surroundings in order to preserve those surroundings. Mitigation under NEPA is applied when the proposed action is determined to have the potential to adversely affect its surroundings (i.e., affect the environment); by avoiding, reducing, minimizing, or eliminating the impact, the facility “fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources.”^b Text throughout Chapters 4 and 5 presents impacts and examples of how the impacts would be mitigated. Discussion is provided to place the degree of impact into the context of the surrounding environment and also to provide clear direction regarding stakeholder responsibilities.</p>
<p>CSS principles include the employment of early, continuous, and meaningful involvement of the public and all stakeholders throughout the project development process.^b</p> <p><i>At the project level, CSS application . . . integrate[s] environmental and community values into transportation decisions at an early point in planning, and continue[s] through project design.</i>^b</p>	<p><i>The EIS process establishes that . . . there shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. The process shall be termed scoping. . . . [40 C.F.R. Part 1501.7] (Further, NEPA provisions encourage the constructive facilitation of public involvement in decisions that affect the quality of the human environment.) (40 C.F.R. Part 1506.6) Scoping is the engagement of agencies, organizations, and the public to identify and flesh out issues, preferences, and concerns regarding project alternatives, potential impacts, recommended mitigation, and future actions. The process starts early in the EIS process and continues to the ROD. Because each project is unique, how scoping occurs and how subsequent public involvement occurs should be tailored to the needs of the EIS process.</i></p>	<p>Examples of engagement of the public and agencies since the EIS process are found throughout the DEIS. Text boxes and sidebars are used throughout to clarify main text based specifically on comments received by the public. Entire chapters (2 and 6) are dedicated to the tailored public involvement process and the results of that process to date. Text beginning on pages 3-7, 3-13, 3-69, 4-108, 4-123, 4-137, and 6-26 are examples of how the public affected alternative design or affected impact analyses. Examples of how the public would remain involved in the project development process are provided on pages 4-100, 4-108, 4-171, and 6-26.</p>
<p><i>An FHWA objective is . . . To improve the environmental quality of transportation decisionmaking, all 50 States . . . will use . . . integrated approaches to multimodal planning, the environmental process and project development at a systems level . . . and/or context sensitive solutions at a project level.</i>^b</p>	<p><i>NEPA promotes . . . integrating the NEPA process into early planning to insure appropriate consideration of NEPA’s policies and to eliminate delay. [40 C.F.R. Part 1501.1] NEPA also calls on federal agencies to . . . integrate the requirements of NEPA with other planning and environmental review procedures required by law or by agency practice so that all such procedures run concurrently rather than consecutively. [40 C.F.R. Part 1500.2(c)]</i></p>	<p>Examples of how the proposed action relates to earlier planning efforts or is integrated into other processes are provided on pages 1-5 and 4-108. Text on page 3-27 reflects how the requirements of Section 404 of the CWA have been incorporated into the EIS process for the proposed action.</p>
<p><i>An outcome of the CSS approach would . . . be reflected in higher quality decisions, better environmental documents, greater consensus, and timelier project delivery.</i>^b</p>	<p><i>NEPA procedures must ensure that . . . environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken. The information must be of high quality. Accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny are essential to implementing NEPA. Most important, NEPA documents must concentrate on the issues that are truly significant to the action in question, rather than amassing needless detail. . . . Ultimately, of course, it is not better documents but better decisions that count. NEPA’s purpose is not to generate paperwork—even excellent paperwork—but to foster excellent action. The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment. These regulations provide the direction to achieve this purpose. [40 C.F.R. Part 1500.1(b and c)]</i></p>	<p>The manner in which the FEIS has been prepared has been largely driven by stakeholder concerns and issues. Examples of how determinations have been made can be found on pages 3-4 and 3-62. Relative to text beginning on page 3-62, the status of the alternatives screening process is clearly described along with a presentation of future actions. Methodologies established for all analytical requirements in preparing the FEIS were reviewed and agreed upon by ADOT, FHWA, and stakeholders, and were shared with EPA; state-of-the industry methodologies were applied in all instances. The EIS process established using a consensus-based approach; at each step, methods, assumptions, and analytical tools were reviewed and agreed upon by the project team (see page 3-1) prior to analysis, and results were shared for review and agreement prior to moving to the next step of the EIS process.</p>

Note: Abbreviations and acronyms are provided at the end of the table, on page 6-31.

^a Examples provided in the column do not reflect a comprehensive list of the application of the related objectives in the FEIS; as stated, they are examples. Additional examples can be found throughout the FEIS.

^b from FHWA’s 2003 Performance Plan (see “Vital Few Goals – Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining”), <environment.fhwa.dot.gov/strmlng/vfovervw.asp>

(continued on next page)

Table 6-9 Application of Context-Sensitive Solutions in the EIS Process (continued)

Element of Context-Sensitive Solutions	Corresponding Element of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations	Examples within the FEIS/Comments ^a
<p><i>Under the CSS approach, the goals for the physical end product of the process include qualities that characterize excellence. These include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project is seen as having added lasting value to the community. • The project is a safe facility for both the user and the community. • The project is in harmony with the community, and it preserves environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resource values of the area, i.e., exhibits context-sensitive design. • The project exceeds the expectations of both designers and stakeholders and achieves a level of excellence in people’s minds. • The project involves efficient and effective use of the resources (time, budget, community) of all involved parties. • The project is designed and built with minimal disruption to the community. • The project satisfies the purpose and needs as agreed to by a full range of stakeholders. This agreement is forged in the earliest phase of the project and amended as warranted as the project develops.^c 	<p><i>Under the EIS process, the federal government has the responsibilities to ensure its actions (e.g., proposed facilities):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations . . . • assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; . . . • attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences . . . • preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice; • achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities; • enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources. [42 U.S.C. § 4331(b)(1–6)] <p><i>Further, NEPA urges that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The federal government . . . use all practicable means, consistent with the requirements of the Act and other essential considerations of national policy, to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment. [40 C.F.R. Part 1500.2(f)]</i> • <i>Agencies . . . integrate the NEPA process with other planning at the earliest possible time to insure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts. [40 C.F.R. Part 1501.21]</i> • <i>Agencies emphasize . . . cooperative consultation among agencies before the environmental impact statement is prepared rather than submission of adversary comments on a completed document. [40 C.F.R. Part 1501.1(b)]</i> 	<p>The goals and responsibilities established for CSS and NEPA respectively are strikingly similar. The agency scoping efforts at the start of the EIS process, as presented on page 6-2, are representative of the cooperative, consensus-based efforts that occurred throughout the process. Attended by 95 agency representatives, scoping involved 2 days of project overview, field study, and brainstorming of issues, concerns, and opportunities.</p>
<p><i>Under the CSS approach, characteristics of a project development process that signifies excellence are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with all stakeholders is open, honest, early, and continuous. • A multidisciplinary team is established early, with disciplines based on the needs of the specific project, and with the inclusion of the public. • A full range of stakeholders is involved with transportation officials in the scoping phase. The purposes of the project are clearly defined, and consensus on the scope is forged before proceeding. • The highway development process is tailored to meet the circumstances. This process should examine multiple alternatives that will result in a consensus of approach methods. • A commitment to the process from top agency officials and local leaders is secured. • The public involvement process, which includes informal meetings, is tailored to the project. • The landscape, the community, and valued resources are understood before engineering design is started. • A full range of tools for communication about project alternatives is used (e.g., visualization).^c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There shall be an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. This process shall be termed scoping. [40 C.F.R. Part 1501.7] • . . . All agencies of the Federal Government shall . . . utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach which will insure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decisionmaking which may have an impact on man’s environment. [42 U.S.C. § 4332] • . . . Use all practicable means, consistent with the requirements of the Act and other essential considerations of national policy, to restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize any possible adverse effects of their actions upon the quality of the human environment. [40 C.F.R. Part 1500.2(f)] 	<p>Chapter 6 presents the extensive public engagement efforts undertaken in the EIS process as specifically tailored to the proposed action. As an example, the SMCAT (see page 6-7) was created to ensure full representation of a broad range of community stakeholders. As presented in Chapter 3, charrettes were held to engage the public in the alternatives development process. As outlined in Chapter 6, myriad tools were used to communicate project information to the public.</p>

^c from the 1998 workshop, *Thinking Beyond the Pavement: A National Workshop on Integrating Highway Development with Communities and the Environment while Maintaining Safety and Performance*, held in Maryland, <sha.maryland.gov/oce/tbtp.pdf>; SAFETEA-LU Section 6008 also addresses these core principles of CSS [see 23 U.S.C. § 109(c)(2)]

(continued on next page)

Table 6-9 Application of Context-Sensitive Solutions in the EIS Process (continued)

Element of Context-Sensitive Solutions	Corresponding Element of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations	Examples within the FEIS/Comments ^a
<p><i>The CSS approach promotes the important evaluation of project alternatives and alternative designs (including nontraditional solutions, such as use of alternative routes or modes). The evaluation allows stakeholders the ability to assess the advantages and disadvantages of a variety of approaches for addressing a project’s purpose and need.</i></p>	<p><i>Use the EIS process to identify and assess the reasonable alternatives to proposed actions that will avoid or minimize adverse effects of these actions on the quality of the human environment.</i></p> <p><i>Under NEPA, agencies should:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • . . . Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated. • Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail including the proposed action so that reviewers may evaluate their comparative merits. • Include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency. • Include the alternative of no action. [40 C.F.R. Part 1502.12(a–d)] 	<p>Alternatives analysis begins with the RTP (see page 1-5), which attempts to optimize the integration of the proposed action with other modal considerations. The modeled traffic projections further enhance alternative modes as potentially viable options (see page 3-4). The alternatives development and screening process (beginning on page 3-1) clearly presents an interdisciplinary process embraced by stakeholders to consider a variety of solutions to address the purpose and need for the project. Reasons some alternative modes were eliminated are presented on page 3-5.</p>

- ADOT – Arizona Department of Transportation
- C.F.R. – Code of Federal Regulations
- CSS – context-sensitive solutions
- CWA – Clean Water Act
- EIS – environmental impact statement
- EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement
- FHWA – Federal Highway Administration
- NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
- ROD – record of decision
- RTP – *Regional Transportation Plan*
- SAFETEA-LU – Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
- SMCAT – South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team
- U.S.C. – United States Code

CONCLUSIONS

Since the start of the EIS process in 2001, ADOT, with the concurrence of FHWA, has exceeded the minimum requirements of NEPA with respect to agency coordination and public involvement. To engage all segments of the public in each step of the EIS process in a meaningful way, ADOT and FHWA implemented several strategies. These included the use of a spectrum

of communication tools; responsiveness to arrange meetings with interested parties upon request; advertised meetings; and other actions to identify opinions, seek input about key issues, and obtain input into the components of the proposed action.

As a result, efforts by ADOT and FHWA to engage all segments of the public as well as agencies and other

stakeholders for a project in the Phoenix metropolitan area have been extensive and are continuing. The input provided has helped to direct the EIS process, affect location of action alternative alignments, influence design-related determinations, and identify appropriate mitigation in response to project-related impacts.