

Management Agency. A floodplain is land subject to periodic flooding from an adjacent body of water. FHWA policies and procedures for the location and hydraulic design of encroachments on floodplains are set forth in 23 C.F.R. § 650.

The Selected Alternative will affect floodplains. Two 100-year floodplains will be affected: one associated with the Salt River and one north of the Roosevelt Irrigation District canal. However, impacts on the overall natural and beneficial values of the floodplain will be negligible. Impacts from floodplain encroachment by the Selected Alternative will be effectively mitigated through an elevated crossing (on piers) of the floodplain, using appropriate bridge design.

16. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the evaluation of information presented above and in the FEIS, the project's purpose and need, input from the public on the DEIS and FEIS, and interagency and tribal coordination, FHWA has decided to identify the W59/E1 Alternative as the Selected Alternative. The Selected Alternative will meet the project needs as well as or better than the other alternatives. The Section 4(f) evaluation demonstrated that no feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives to use of the South Mountains' Section 4(f) resources are available. Direct use of the resource is the same regardless of the combination of action alternatives in the Western and Eastern Sections (representing a range of reasonable alternatives). Relative to other action alternatives considered, the Selected Alternative will have similar environmental effects on natural resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials, and noise; will displace fewer residences; will have the lowest impact on total tax revenues of local

governments; will have lower construction costs; will cause less construction disruption overall to I-10 (Papago Freeway); will include measures to reduce impacts and minimize harm; represents all possible planning to minimize harm to resources afforded protection under Section 4(f); is favored by the majority of local governments; and will allow regulatory permitting requirements to be met. FHWA, in consultation with ADOT, arrived at this decision based on information presented in the FEIS and the factors and commitments presented above.

FHWA selects the Preferred Alternative (W59/E1 Alternative) for the South Mountain Freeway (Loop 202) project. FHWA finds that ADOT has incorporated all practicable measures to minimize environmental harm into the project. FHWA and ADOT will ensure that the commitments outlined herein and in the FEIS will be implemented as part of the project design, construction, and postconstruction monitoring.