
5 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The USACE and the Port's planning process incorporates public involvement and coordination elements to ensure responsiveness to the needs and concerns of the public, and to involve all interested parties in the decision-making process. Specifically, the objectives of the planning process are to: 1) provide information about the proposed action to the public; 2) make public desires, needs, and concerns available to the decision makers; 3) provide for adequate interaction with the public before decisions are made; and 4) adequately account for the views of the public when making decisions.

The public scoping process began on June 13, 2008, with publication of a Notice of Intent (NOI) and Notice of Preparation (NOP) in the Federal Register. The NOI included background information, potential alternatives, methods for public comment, and notification of the public meeting date and location. A Public Notice was sent to local landowners and residents through postal and electronic mail. News releases informing the public of the meeting were published in the West Sacramento News-Ledger, the Sacramento Bee, Contra Costa Times, and San Francisco Chronicle (USACE 2009c).

The publication of the NOI began a public scoping period that ran from June 16 through July 22, 2008. The public meeting was held on June 30, 2008, at the West Sacramento City Hall in West Sacramento, California. The purpose of the meeting was to gather public input on the Proposed Project's scope and to outline a schedule for future activities and public involvement. Following this meeting, public comments were categorized and compiled in the *Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel Scoping Report* (USACE 2009c). A total of 26 comments, both written and verbal, were received from members of the public, private interest groups, and agencies including USEPA, DWR, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Contra Costa Water District, Central Valley RWQCB, Reclamation District 501, East Bay Regional Park District, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. A number of comments received pertained to the volume of material dredged, how material is handled, the location of dredged material placement sites, and potential beneficial use opportunities. Other comments concerned project impacts on hydrology, salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen (DO), drinking water, sea level rise, levees, special status species, pelagic organisms, EFH, resuspension of contaminated sediments, sedimentation, pollutant emissions, utilities, traffic, the Rio Vista Bridge, environmental justice communities, land use, and recreational facilities.

When this Draft SEIS/SEIR was completed, a Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in the Federal Register announcing the beginning of a 45-day public comment period. The comment period began the day after the NOA was published in the Federal Register. Parties must submit comments during the comment period to be eligible to appeal decisions based

on the Final SEIS/SEIR. The Draft SEIS/SEIR is available at the offices and libraries noted in Section 6.2.4, and the NOA was provided to all persons on the distribution list in Section 6.2. During the comment period, a public meeting will be held on the Draft SEIS/SEIR at the West Sacramento City Hall in West Sacramento, California. Comments on the Draft SEIS/SEIR received from agencies and the public during the comment period will be reviewed and addressed in the Final SEIS/SEIR. The Final SEIS/SEIR will identify the preferred alternative and is expected to be available to the public in 2011.

When the Final SEIS/SEIR is completed, an NOA will be published in the Federal Register to begin a 30-day availability period for the Final SEIS/SEIR. A news release regarding the availability of the Final SEIS/SEIR will also be provided in the West Sacramento News-Ledger, the Sacramento Bee, Contra Costa Times, and San Francisco Chronicle. Copies of the Final SEIS/SEIR will be available at the libraries noted in Section 6.2.4 and provided to all persons on the distribution list in Section 6.2. Although the availability period is not a formal public comment period, the public may provide comments on the Final SEIS/SEIR. The USACE and the Port will consider public comments on the Final SEIS/SEIR, and determine if any such comments would require the preparation of a supplemental document.

Comments on the Final SEIS/SEIR may also be addressed in the Record of Decision (ROD), which will document and discuss the selected alternative, the environmentally preferable alternative (if different from the selected alternative), and any accompanying mitigation measures. The ROD is expected to be available to the public in 2011. The ROD will be issued in full force and effect, and thus cannot be issued until at least 30 days after publication of the NOA for the Final SEIS/SEIR and at least 90 days after release of the Draft SEIS/SEIR. A party adversely affected by a decision in a ROD may appeal the decision according to the applicable regulations, which will be noted in the ROD.