

DRAFT

Agency Coordination Plan

As Part of the Environmental Review Process for the
Downtown Access Project
(I-515/US 95/US 93)
Las Vegas, Nevada

Federal Highway Administration, Nevada Division
Nevada Department of Transportation



NDOT Project Number: 74291
FHWA Project Number: SPI-515-1(040)

August 2023

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAA	Clean Air Act
CFR	<i>Code of Federal Regulations</i>
Coordination Plan	Agency Coordination Plan
Corps	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
CWA	Clean Water Act
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
I-515	Interstate 515
NDEP	Nevada Division of Environmental Protection
NDOT	Nevada Department of Transportation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOI	Notice of Intent
ROD	Record of Decision
SNRHA	Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority
US 93	U.S. Highway 93
US 95	U.S. Highway 95
U.S.C.	<i>United States Code</i>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Coordination Plan

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate potential improvements to provide safe and reliable travel along a 4-mile-long segment of Interstate 515 (I-515)/ U.S. Highway 95 (US 95)/ U.S. Highway 93 (US 93), located in Las Vegas, Nevada (this corridor is hereafter referred to as US 95^[1]). The project is referred to as the Downtown Access Project. The requirement to develop an Agency Coordination Plan (hereafter referred to as a Coordination Plan) is established in Title 23 *United States Code* (U.S.C.) § 139 and in Title 23 *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) Part 771.123 (b)(2).

The purpose of this Coordination Plan is to communicate how and when the lead agencies—FHWA and NDOT—will coordinate public and agency participation during the environmental review process for the Downtown Access Project.

This Coordination Plan:

- Provides the project background, including the purpose and need, as well as a summary of early coordination efforts
- Identifies lead, cooperating, and participating agencies involved in the study
- Establishes the timing and form of agency involvement in defining the need for the project, the range of alternatives to be evaluated, and impact assessment methodologies
- Reviews the Draft EIS and identifies the preferred alternative and mitigation strategies
- Provides a project schedule
- Details permitting requirements and timing
- Describes the communication methods for informing the community about the project

New regulations, policy, and guidance may require changes to the Coordination Plan and other aspects of the environmental review process. Over the course of the project, NDOT will periodically update this Coordination Plan to reflect these and other major changes to the project schedule and other items, as required. NDOT will forward copies of updates to agencies and make them available to the public through the project website, at public information meetings, and by request.

1.2 Project Background

The study area for the Downtown Access Project extends along US 95 from Mojave Road (eastern limit) to Rancho Drive (western limit) (Figure 1-1). The study limits include the I-15/US 95/I-515 system interchange, locally known as the Las Vegas Spaghetti Bowl. The study limits include the Spaghetti Bowl to address traffic congestion on US 95 through the Spaghetti Bowl and to assess the effects of proposed improvements on the adjacent sections of the freeways. The Project NEON improvements to the Spaghetti Bowl ramps and US 95 will not be affected. Northern and southern study limits along US 95

^[1] This document refers to the freeway as US 95 rather than US 95/I-515/US 93 because most Las Vegas residents refer to it as US 95.

will vary by resource but will extend far enough to assess potential traffic, socioeconomic and environmental impacts from improving US 95, and necessary changes to local streets.

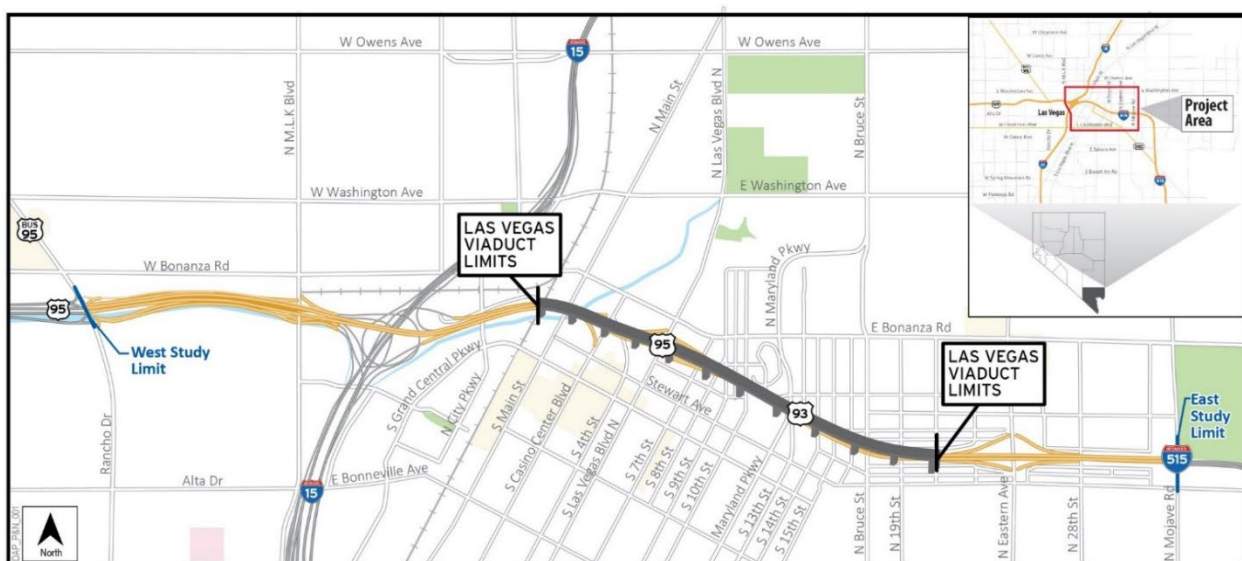
1.2.1 Purpose, Need, and Goals

The purpose of the project is to address aging infrastructure, safety, and congestion along I-515/US 95 between Rancho Drive and Mojave Road in Las Vegas to increase the efficiency of the movement of people, goods, and services on the freeway as well as revitalize and reconnect the community. Improvements are necessary to address the following needs: (1) aging bridges, (2) closely spaced ramps that create short merge and weave distances, and (3) unacceptable congestion caused by increased traffic volumes on a freeway structure that has never been widened in a city that has grown 1,000% since 1968.

In addition to these needs, several community and sustainability goals were identified to further aid the development and evaluation of alternatives. These reflect topics important to the public, stakeholders, and agencies.

Restore Community	Advance Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Neighborhood Multimodal Mobility • Reconnect Neighborhoods • Enhance Public Health and Wellness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve Human and Natural Environments • Improve Infrastructure Resiliency • Support Economic Growth

Figure 1-1. Study Area



1.2.2 Pre-Notice of Intent Coordination

Early coordination/pre-Notice of Intent (NOI) scoping was initiated to obtain comments and input from agencies and the public to help determine issues to be examined as part of the EIS process, and to refine the purpose and need for the project and alternatives to be evaluated.

NDOT sent initial coordination letters via email to federal, state, and local agencies to notify them of the study on April 6, 2020. The letters contained a project summary and project location map. The purpose of this outreach was to introduce the project and invite the recipients to engage as a cooperating or participating agency. Table 1-1 identifies the recipients who received the invitation, as well as the agencies that agreed to serve as participating or cooperating agencies.

NDOT consulted with the cooperating and participating agencies on several documents:

- Preliminary Draft Purpose and Need Statement
- This Draft Agency Coordination Plan
- Draft Impact Assessment Methodologies (this document describes the proposed methods to be used for analyzing the impacts of the alternatives by environmental resource topic)
- Project Schedule
- Range of Alternatives to be Evaluated

NDOT held a virtual agency scoping meeting on January 19, 2021, to obtain input from the cooperating and participating agencies. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Bureau of Indian Affairs, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), City of Las Vegas, and City of North Las Vegas attended the agency scoping meeting. Discussion topics included project history, the EIS process and schedule, the purpose and need factors, and alternatives. Meeting participants also discussed the Coordination Plan and impact assessment methodologies and the overall project schedule. At this meeting, local street closures under the freeway were noted as an issue. EPA provided written comments prior to the meeting expressing their concern about air quality impacts and impacts to community facilities, in particular impacts to low-income and minority communities.

Table 1-1. Lead, Cooperating, and Participating Agencies

Agency	Category	Point of Contact
FHWA	Lead Federal Agency	Abdelmoez Abdalla
NDOT	Lead State Agency	Ryan Wheeler
Corps of Engineers, Reno Field Office	Cooperating Agency	Kirsten Grabreck
EPA Region 9	Cooperating Agency	Carolyn Mulvihill
City of Las Vegas	Participating Agency	Mike Janssen Joey Paskey
Clark County	Participating Agency	Denis Cederburg
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Las Vegas Field Office (HUD)	Participating Agency	Phyllis Hargrove
Southern Nevada Regional Housing Authority (SNRHA)	Participating Agency	Lewis Jordan

Agencies that declined to participate: Bureau of Indian Affairs Western Regional Office; Bureau of Land Management Southern Nevada District Las Vegas Field Office; Federal Railroad Administration; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Southern Nevada Office; and Nevada SHPO.

Agencies that did not respond: Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada; City of North Las Vegas; Las Vegas Paiute Colony; Moapa Band of Paiutes Business Council; and Pahrump Paiute tribe.

2.0 AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The intent of coordination with tribal, federal, state, and local agencies is to cooperatively identify important environmental or cultural resources and potential impacts, as well as to resolve issues that could delay the environmental process or that could result in denial of approvals required to implement the proposed project. The general responsibilities for lead, cooperating, and participating agencies in the environmental review process for this project are described in this section.

2.1 Agency Contacts and Roles

2.1.1 Lead Agencies

FHWA is the lead federal agency and NDOT is the lead state agency for this project. As “joint lead agencies,” their responsibilities include managing the environmental review and documentation process, preparing the EIS, and providing opportunities for public and participating or cooperating agency involvement.

FHWA will invite other affected or interested federal agencies and Native American tribes to participate in the project’s environmental review process. NDOT will invite other affected or interested state and local agencies to participate in the process. NDOT is responsible for investigating the project alternatives, implementing the environmental review process, and preparing the environmental document. FHWA oversees the environmental review process and concurs that the process, as implemented by NDOT, satisfies applicable federal laws and guidance.

Lead agencies are expected to:

- Manage and coordinate the environmental review process, ensuring that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken
- Prepare the EIS in accordance with 23 CFR 771 (FHWA Environmental Impact and Related Procedures) and 40 CFR 1500-1508 (Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing NEPA)
- Provide, as early as practicable, accurate and complete project information on the project need, environmental resources, alternatives, proposed impact assessment methodologies, and mitigation measures
- Identify and involve cooperating and participating agencies
- Develop the Coordination Plan
- Provide the opportunity for public and agency involvement in defining the project need, alternatives carried forward for detailed study, and preferred alternative identification
- Collaborate with cooperating and participating agencies to determine impact assessment methodologies and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives and mitigation measures
- Consult with and involve Native American tribal governments for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Manage and facilitate the process of resolving issues

2.1.2 Cooperating Agencies

A cooperating agency is defined in NEPA under the Council for Environmental Quality Regulation (40 CFR 1508.5) as “any federal or state agency, other than a lead agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative.”

The roles and responsibilities of cooperating and participating agencies are similar, but cooperating agencies have a higher degree of authority, responsibility, and involvement in the environmental review process. A distinguishing feature of a cooperating agency is that the Council for Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1501.6[b][3]) permit a cooperating agency to “assume on request of the lead agency responsibility for developing information and preparing environmental analyses including portions of the environmental impact statement concerning which the cooperating agency has special expertise.” An additional distinction is that pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.3(c), “a cooperating agency may adopt without recirculation of the environmental impact statement of a lead agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied.” This provision is particularly important to permitting agencies, who, as cooperating agencies, routinely adopt environmental documents.

Cooperating agencies will use their knowledge and expertise to assist the lead agencies in identifying concerns regarding the project’s potential impacts and provide meaningful and timely input throughout the environmental review process. If a cooperating agency fails to respond in a timely manner, the lead agency will assume they have fulfilled the coordination step with the agency for that issue. Cooperating agencies may adopt the lead agency’s final environmental document to fulfill their environmental documentation requirements for issuing permits or other approvals.

Cooperating agencies are expected to:

- Provide required written concurrence at concurrence points (Section 2.2)
- Assist the lead agencies in identifying environmental, community, or cultural resources of concern
- Identify, as early as practicable, any concerns regarding the project’s environmental, community, cultural, or socioeconomic impacts
- Identify, as early as practicable, any issues that could substantially delay or prevent granting of permits or other approvals needed for the project
- Share information that may be useful to the joint lead agencies, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies
- Participate in meetings and field reviews
- Provide timely concurrence at milestones on the project need, alternatives carried forward for detailed study, and preferred alternative identification
- Provide comments on the Coordination Plan, impact assessment methodologies, potential project impacts, and mitigation measures in a timely manner
- Review and comment on the Administrative Draft EIS, Draft EIS, Final EIS, and the Record of Decision (ROD)

- Participate as needed in resolving issues

FHWA issued invitations to participating agencies for the proposed project on April 6, 2020. The cooperating agencies for this proposed project are the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and EPA. The cooperating agencies received copies of the initiation package and a request for concurrence with the proposed project purpose and need. If new information becomes available that would require the designation of any additional cooperating agency, FHWA will issue that agency an invitation. The list of cooperating agencies is included in Table 1-1.

2.1.3 Participating Agencies

Participating agencies are federal or non-federal governmental agencies that may have an interest in the proposed project due to their jurisdictional authority, special expertise, and/or statewide interest. These participating agencies are formally invited to participate in the proposed project's environmental review process.

Participating agencies include tribes and federal, state, and local agencies that have an interest in the project. These agencies agree to identify concerns regarding the project's potential impacts, and to provide meaningful and timely input on the purpose and need, range of alternatives, and impact assessment methodologies.

Participating agencies are expected to:

- Assist the lead agencies in identifying environmental or cultural resources of concern
- Identify, as early as practicable, any concerns regarding the project's environmental, cultural, or socioeconomic impacts
- Share information that may be useful to the lead agencies, cooperating agencies, and other participating agencies
- Participate in meetings and field reviews as appropriate and when invited
- Provide comments on the project need, Coordination Plan, impact assessment methodologies, project alternatives, potential impacts, and mitigation measures in a timely manner
- Review and comment on the Draft EIS and Final EIS
- Participate as needed in resolving issues

FHWA issued invitations to participating agencies for the proposed project on April 6, 2020. The list of agencies invited to participate is in Table 1-1. Participating agencies received copies of the initiation package for their review. Additional agencies can be invited and added to the list of participants at any time, as appropriate.

2.1.4 NHPA Section 106 Consultation

Under Section 106 of the NHPA, FHWA identified parties that need to be consulted (termed "consulting parties") regarding resources that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. As a part of the consultation requirements for Section 106, FHWA sent invitations to participate as consulting parties in the Section 106 process to parties with a known or potential interest in historic

and archaeological resources, including the SHPO and others who express interest in the Section 106 activities for the proposed project.

Section 106 also requires federal agencies to work with Native American tribes that may have a cultural or religious association to historic properties affected by an agency's undertakings. Federal agencies shall ensure that tribal consultation in the Section 106 process provides the tribe with a reasonable opportunity to identify its concerns about historic properties, advise on the identification and evaluation of historic properties, articulate its views on the undertaking's effects on such properties, and participate in the resolution of adverse effects. Consultation should be conducted in a manner recognizing the unique government-to-government relationship that exists between the federal government and tribes, should be respectful of tribal sovereignty, and should be sensitive to the concerns and needs of the tribes.

As part of the EIS activities, the lead agencies will initiate government-to-government consultation with the following Native American tribes to notify them of the project need, alternatives being considered, and planned cultural resource investigations, and to request their aid in determining the Area of Potential Effect for historic properties, areas of interest, and any traditional cultural properties in the study area:

- Las Vegas Paiute tribe
- Moapa Band of Paiutes
- Pahrump Paiute tribe

If necessary, a separate Coordination Plan will guide the lead agencies' coordination efforts with the tribes. All Section 106 consulting parties will receive all relevant proposed project documentation during development of the Environmental Impact Statement. The NEPA public involvement activities for the proposed project will be used to satisfy Section 106 requirements for public involvement.

2.2 Coordination Points and Responsibilities

2.2.1 Concurrence Points

Concurrence is a statement by a cooperating agency that the information to date is adequate for the project to advance to the next stage of project development. Agencies agree not to revisit the previous process steps unless conditions change. Concurrence by an agency at a concurrence point does not imply that the project has been approved by that agency or that it has released its obligation to determine whether the fully developed project meets statutory review criteria. Concurrence by an agency means confirmation from that agency that information is sufficient for that stage of the NEPA process, and that the NEPA environmental review process may proceed to the next stage. There are three concurrence points in the process:

1. The purpose and need for the project
2. The range of alternatives to be carried forward for detailed analysis in the EIS
3. Identification of the preferred alternative

The process for coordinating at each of the concurrence points is discussed in the following section. For each concurrence point, the agencies will be given 30 days from receipt of the package to review and provide a response, and a reminder will be sent to the agencies 10 days before the end of the review

period. At the end of the 30-day period, FHWA and NDOT will receive a concurrence, a non-concurrence, a request for a 15-day time extension, or a request for cessation of formal concurrence from each agency. FHWA and NDOT will assume concurrence from those agencies from which it has not received a response at the end of the 30-day period.

Participating agencies will be asked to review and comment at each of these concurrence points as well. They may be asked to provide concurrence; however, their concurrence is not required for the NEPA environmental review to proceed.

2.2.1.1 Concurrence Point 1—Purpose and Need

As part of early coordination activities, NDOT and FHWA developed and shared a preliminary purpose and need statement with participating and cooperating agencies in 2020. The Corps and EPA both provided concurrence on the preliminary purpose and need (June 1 and 12, 2020, respectively).

The purpose and need statement has since been updated to reflect input received from agencies and the public; it will be re-sent to participating and cooperating agencies for their review and comment. FHWA and NDOT will request concurrence on the updated purpose and need statement.

2.2.1.2 Concurrence Point 2—Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Evaluation

As part of early coordination activities, NDOT and FHWA shared the preliminary range of alternatives considered to participating and cooperating agencies in early 2022. This led to further discussions and revisions to the alternatives considered.

The alternatives have since been updated to reflect input received from agencies and the public. NDOT and FHWA will send an updated version of the alternatives to be carried forward for evaluation to participating and cooperating agencies for their review and comment. FHWA and NDOT will request concurrence on the updated alternatives to be carried forward for evaluation.

2.2.1.3 Concurrence Point 3—Preferred Alternative

Based on the results of Concurrence Point 2, input received from the public, and the analysis of cost, impacts, and effectiveness of alternatives in addressing the project needs, FHWA and NDOT will identify a preferred alternative. FHWA and NDOT will notify cooperating and participating agencies and request their concurrence. Based on the input received from this concurrence point, FHWA and NDOT intend to identify the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS.

2.2.2 Draft EIS

Once the detailed investigation of alternatives and analysis of impacts and potential mitigation strategies is completed, NDOT will prepare a Draft EIS. Throughout the Draft EIS development, NDOT has conducted informal engagement with local stakeholders. The project team provides periodic updates on the project website or through other media described in the Public Involvement Plan. The informal engagement and official comments from the public meetings have provided important input into the concept and environmental studies. As the Draft EIS preparation is in progress, NDOT will provide some sections for informal preliminary review and technical input by FHWA. After assembling the complete Draft EIS through its project team, NDOT will submit it to FHWA for review and comment. After any comments from FHWA are addressed, the Draft EIS will be sent to the agencies for review and

comment. After reviewing and addressing comments from agencies, NDOT will finalize the Draft EIS for resubmittal to FHWA.

2.2.3 Combined Final EIS and Record of Decision

After the close of the Draft EIS comment period, NDOT will prepare the combined Final EIS/ROD document for approval by FHWA. All comments received during the review of the Draft EIS and responses to each comment will be included in the Final EIS/ROD.

Initial coordination with the two cooperating agencies has included a discussion of agency requirements for NEPA approval.

After FHWA's approval of the Final EIS/ROD, the document will be made available for public and agency review for 30 days. All authorization decisions will be issued within 90 days after the ROD is authorized. The primary federal authorization anticipated is permitting under the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 by the Corps.

2.2.4 Issue Identification and Resolution Process

In 2012, the surface transportation bill known as MAP-21 clarified and enhanced 23 U.S.C. 139(h), *Issue Identification and Resolution*, with three distinct processes:

1. Accelerated interim decision-making prior to the ROD
2. A revised issue resolution and referral process
3. Prescribed penalties to federal agencies for not making decisions within communicated timelines.

Guidance for implementing these processes is provided herein. FHWA will continue to monitor the implementation of these processes and make changes to this Coordination Plan as needed. The lead agencies, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies will work together to identify and resolve issues that could delay completion of the environmental review process or that could result in denial of any approvals required for the project under applicable laws.

Based on information received from the lead agencies, the cooperating and participating agencies will identify, as early as practicable, any concerns regarding the project's potential environmental, community, cultural, or socioeconomic impacts. Concerns include anything that could substantially delay or prevent concurrence, the granting of permits, or other approvals needed to implement the project.

Dispute resolution will be implemented when there is failure to reach concurrence at a concurrence point or when there is substantial disagreement at a critical decision point. The resolution process will first consist of an informal attempt by the lead agencies to reach concurrence/agreement among cooperating and participating agencies. Participants will include a representative of each of the federal agencies and appropriate state agencies. Each agency will make its best effort to resolve disputes. Within 30 days of an agency identifying non-concurrence at a critical decision point, a "formal dispute resolution" meeting of designated agency representatives will be convened.

A formal dispute resolution meeting will be convened at an agreed upon location and time. At this meeting, the parties will attempt to resolve agency concerns through consensus. This may include providing information or detail not previously provided. If the concerns are resolved at this meeting, the process is ended and the concurrence is formalized in the agreed-upon manner.

If a resolution cannot be achieved within 30 days following the formal dispute resolution meeting, the lead agencies will seek assistance from FHWA headquarters in elevating the resolution process.

The environmental review and documentation process may continue regardless of whether attempts to reach concurrence are successful. However, if the dispute remains unresolved, the agency in non-concurrence retains its options to elevate its concerns through existing, formalized dispute elevation procedures at the appropriate point in the environmental review or permitting process.

3.0 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Table 3-1 presents the items that have been completed to date and the anticipated schedule for completing the EIS and issuing a ROD for this project. NDOT and FHWA may revise this schedule as the project moves forward.

Table 3-1. Project Schedule

Task	Estimated Date
Pre-NOI input on Concurrence Point 1 – Purpose and Need	July 2020
First Public Information Meeting/Public Pre-NOI Scoping	August-September 2020
Agency Pre-NOI Scoping Meeting	January 2021
Second Public Information Meeting	January 2022
Pre-NOI input on Concurrence Point 2 – Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Evaluation	February 2022
Publish NOI	October 2023
Third Public Information Meeting/Public Scoping	August 2023
Agency Scoping / Concurrence Point 1 – Updated Purpose and Need / Concurrence Point 2 – Updated Alternatives to be Carried Forward for Evaluation	December 2023
Draft EIS	May 2024
Public Hearing	May 2024
Concurrence Point 3 – Preferred Alternative	June 2024
Final EIS/ROD	November 2024
Issue all remaining project permits and authorization decisions (if a Build Alternative is selected)	January 2025

4.0 PERMITTING TIMETABLE

During the EIS process, NDOT will review this draft permitting timetable with the listed resource agencies and request their agreement on the timeframes to complete the permitting process. The timetable will be updated as needed throughout the EIS process.

4.1 Federal Lead Agency/Action

FHWA – EIS

Milestone	Target Date
Issuance of NOI to prepare an EIS	October 2023
Resource Agency Scoping	October 2023
Notice of Availability of a Draft EIS published in the <i>Federal Register</i> beginning both the public comment period and concurrent Clean Air Act (CAA) Section 309 Review	March 2024
Notice of Availability of combined Final EIS /ROD in the <i>Federal Register</i>	November 2024

Responsible Agency: FHWA
Phone: (775) 687-1231

Point of contact: Abdelmoez Abdalla
Email: abdelmoez.abdalla@dot.gov

SHPO – Cultural Resources – Section 106 Consultation

Milestone	Target Date
Consultation initiated with SHPO/Tribal Historic Preservation Office	February 2020
Consultation concludes*	February 2025

* Conclusion of Section 106 can be:

- No cultural resources (historic properties or archaeological resources) affected;
- Finding of no adverse effect; or
- Memorandum of agreement or programmatic agreement or other conclusion to resolve adverse effects reached.

Responsible Agency: SHPO
Phone: (775) 684-3437

Point of contact: Robin Reed
Email: rreed@shpo.gov

Corps – Section 404 CWA

Milestone	Target Date
Complete Pre-Construction Notification/Application Received	June 2024
Final Verification/Permit Decision Rendered	December 2024

Responsible Agency: Corps
Phone: (775) 784-5304

Point of contact: Kirsten Grabreck
Email: Kirsten.R.Grabreck@usace.army.mil

4.2 State, Local, Tribal, Other Non-Federal Agency and Not Cooperating or Participating Agency

Section 401 Water Quality Certification

Milestone	Target Date
Completed Application Received	June 2024
Permit Decision Rendered	December 2024

Responsible Agency: NDEP
Phone: (775) 687-4670

Point of contact: Jennifer Carr
Email: jcarr@ndep.nv.gov

Stormwater Discharge Permit

Milestone	Target Date
NOI Application Submitted	14 days prior to construction
Notice of Termination Submitted	Conclusion of construction

Responsible Agency: NDEP
Phone: (775) 687-9418

Point of contact: Jennifer Carr
Email: jcarr@ndep.nv.gov

5.0 PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public involvement includes engaging key stakeholders, community members, and the public in the planning, design, and development of proposed improvements.

5.1 Outreach Conducted to Date

A summary of the public outreach conducted to date is in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1. Public Outreach

Event	Purpose
January 2019 to Present – Stakeholder Meetings	Share project details and continue dialogue with those close to the freeway.
August 2020 to Present – Stakeholder Emails	Project updates and opportunities to provide input.
January 2020 – Intent to Study Letter	Project introduction.
August to September 2020 – First Public Information Meeting/Public Pre-NOI Scoping Meeting	Project introduction and scoping to introduce the project and solicit feedback on the project’s purpose and need, preliminary design alternatives, and proposed street closures. There was also information about NDOT’s right-of-way acquisition process, project schedule, and how to stay informed.
March to April 2021 – Street Closures Campaign	6-week campaign that included temporarily closing streets to get feedback on proposed street closures.
May to June 2021 – Environmental Justice Survey	Project introduction, confirmed accuracy of census data, and learn how often adjacent residents use I-515. Knocked on 1,300 doors to gather input.
November 2022 – Focus Groups	Project introduction, gathered feedback on preliminary alternatives with four groups of residents and one group of commuters.
December 2021 to February 2022 – Mitigation Measures Survey	Requested input on potential mitigation measures for project.
January to February 2022 – Second Public Information Meeting	Gathered feedback on preliminary alternatives, environmental impacts, and mitigation options/community enhancements. There was also information about NDOT’s right-of-way acquisition process, project schedule, and how to stay informed.
February 2022 – Phone Survey	Project introduction, gathered feedback on preliminary alternatives with 1,100+ residents.
August 2022 to Spring 2023 – Community Conversations	Held 15 community meetings with nearly 150 participants to discuss the project’s revised purpose and need statement, concerns and challenges living near the freeway, freeway design options, and community enhancements.
January 2023 – Unhoused Survey	Obtained additional demographics information and learned more about the unhoused community living under the viaduct.
August 2023 – Third Public Information Meeting	Gathered feedback on revised purpose and need, revised preliminary alternatives, environmental impacts, and mitigation measures. There was also information about NDOT’s right-of-way acquisition process, project schedule, and how to stay informed.

5.2 Continued Outreach

A separate Public Involvement Plan developed for this project includes a comprehensive outline of public involvement activities to be carried out during the course of the project. The Public Involvement Plan is a living document and will be updated as the project progresses and new information on public or stakeholder outreach is obtained. The public involvement approach is based on the following objectives:

- Actively seek public input on the project's purpose and need, alternatives, and recommended course of action
- Solicit, consider, answer, and document public inquiries, suggestions, ideas, and concerns in the decision-making process
- Provide opportunities for the public to affect major decisions before those decisions are made
- Publicize project activities through a variety of communication venues, such as newsletters, news releases, a project website, and informational meetings
- Provide the public with efficient access to project information

NDOT will continue the collaboration, communication, and cooperation between all who are involved in environmental decisions, including government officials, private businesses, and the public. Stakeholder and public input continue to provide important insight to NDOT as it analyzes the Build Alternatives and selects the Preferred Alternative for the Downtown Access Project. Public and agency input will be integrated into the technical evaluation process before decisions are made.

Prior to the completion of the Draft EIS, a series of public meetings will be held to share results of technical studies. The purpose of the meetings is to share the preliminary findings of the technical investigations so the public can have meaningful input prior to the final preparation of the Draft EIS for circulation. Public meetings may be held virtually rather than in-person.

Once FHWA and NDOT publish the Draft EIS, NDOT will hold public hearings to receive comments from the public on the official findings presented in the Draft EIS and on the project.