

## 5.0 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

### 5.1 Agency Coordination

Due to the emergency nature of the project, a majority of the agency coordination took place during the Detour Feasibility Study. This decision was made in order to expedite the environmental approval process and was approved by the DOTD and FHWA during project scoping. Five agency meetings were held during the Detour Feasibility Study:

- Project Initiation Meeting on March 27, 2013 at DOTD Headquarters in Baton Rouge
- Stakeholder Meeting #1 on April 11, 2013 at Assumption Parish Office of Emergency Preparedness (OEP) -Police Jury Meeting Room in Napoleonville
- Well Avoidance Meeting on April 25, 2013 at DOTD Headquarters in Baton Rouge
- Permitting Coordination Meeting on July 19, 2013 at LDNR in Baton Rouge
- Stakeholder Meeting #2 on July 31, 2013 at DOTD Headquarters in Baton Rouge

A summary of each meeting and sign-in sheets are available in Appendix D of the Detour Feasibility Study, which is included on a CD at the end of this document. As part of the EA outreach, SOV letters were mailed on June 10, 2013, to federal, state, and local agencies and elected officials. A full list of recipients is located at the beginning of **Appendix B**. Agency responses are discussed throughout Chapters 3 and 4.

The USACE was invited to be a cooperating agency. A cooperating agency means any Federal 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. USACE accepted the role of a cooperating agency.

The USFWS, LDWF, and LDNR were invited to be participating agencies. A second invitation was extended to the LDNR when the department assigned a singular project manager to coordinate correspondence between the Coastal Management Division and Department of Conservation. Based on participation in the Detour Feasibility Study, the Assumption Parish Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness was also invited to become a participating agency. Participating agencies are active participants in the NEPA evaluation and they consist of a governmental agency at any level with an interest in the proposed project. An invited participating agency is designated as participating unless the agency declines the invitation. None of the agencies invited to participate declined the invitation.

## 5.2 Public Outreach

Similar to agency coordination efforts, public outreach efforts were primarily conducted as part of the Detour Feasibility Study; only a public hearing was scheduled during the Planning/Environmental process. The Detour Feasibility Study public meeting was held on August 13, 2013, at the Assumption Parish Community Center, located at 4910 Louisiana Highway 308 in Napoleonville. The purpose of this meeting was to provide an overview of the proposed project, present build alternatives, and obtain public input. Members of the EA consultant team attended this meeting to ensure consistency with the material being presented and the ongoing EA line and grade development. A copy of the public meeting summary, sign-in sheets, public comments, handouts and the presentation can be found in Appendix E of the Detour Feasibility Study, which is included on a CD at the end of this document as **Attachment 1**.

The Assumption Parish Police Jury posted a copy of the EA SOV letter and map to their sinkhole blog, which generated additional public comments during the Detour Feasibility Study. A summary of the comments and responses are included in **Appendix G**. Any other comments received from the public as part of the Feasibility Study outreach process are summarized in the Detour Feasibility Study final report.

A public hearing was held as part of this Planning/Environmental process. The purpose of this hearing was to provide the public with the findings of this EA, and to solicit comments on the project from individuals, groups, officials, and local agencies. The initial notice of availability was submitted to *The Advocate* (official state journal), *The Bayou Journal* (official parish journal), and *The Assumption Pioneer* (local paper with circulation in project area) on November 12, 2014. This allowed for the required 30-40 day notice prior to the public hearing. This notice included the location to review the EA document as well as details of the public hearing.

The paid public notice ran twice in each of the three publications: *The Advocate* on November 17, 2014 and December 12, 2014; *The Bayou Journal* on November 18, 2014 and December 9, 2014; and *The Assumption Pioneer* on November 20, 2014 and December 11, 2014. An announcement was also posted on the Assumption Parish Police Jury blog on December 9 and 11, 2014. There was an announcement on DOTD's website which was posted on November 12, 2014 and advertised through the public hearing date.

A Microsoft Outlook calendar invite was sent to local/state agencies and elected officials. E-mail invitations were also sent to residents, interested parties, and utility companies. The initial electronic invite was sent on November 13, 2014 with follow up reminders sent December 12 and 17, 2014. If an e-mail address was not available, a copy of the public notice was mailed to interested parties on November 14, 2014. The complete invite list and copies of electronic invitations can be found in **Appendix G**.

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According to the notices, the EA was available to the public for review at DOTD's District Office, the FHWA Division Office, and the DOTD Environmental Section Office, all in Baton Rouge. It was also available for review from November 12, 2014 through January 2, 2015 at the Assumption Parish Library, both the Napoleonville and Pierre Part Branches. An electronic copy of the EA was available to download from the DOTD Environmental Section's website.

The public hearing for this EA was held on December 17, 2014 from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Assumption Parish Community Center in Napoleonville. The hearing was conducted using a combination open-house and a pre-recorded presentation format to allow for the most flexibility in attendance. A total of 37 people attended, including nineteen (19) members of the public, thirteen (13) agency representatives and/or elected officials, and five (5) members of the consultant team.

Attendees at the hearing were reminded of the EA comment period, which extended through January 2, 2015. Participants were asked to provide any comments during this time frame to become part of the EA document. Opportunities for comments at the public hearing were made by providing a court reporter to transcribe verbal comments or via comment forms to provide written comments. Written comments could be turned in at the hearing or mailed in. No comments were received at the public hearing and no mailed in comments were received by either the consultant team or DOTD after the hearing. The hearing summary, including handouts, the hearing layout and exhibits, public notices, invitations, court reporter transcript, sign in sheets, and photographs are included as **Appendix G**.

