

# **Public Information Meeting Summary Report for SR 195; I-8 to US 95**

ADOT Project No. 195 YU 27 H7043 01L

Federal Aid No. STP-195-B(AVK)

Prepared for:

**Arizona Department of Transportation**



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## Introduction

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The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), held a public information meeting to present recommendations from the May 2009 *Alternative Selection Report and Environmental Overview* and to seek specific comments on the recommendations for the proposed extension of State Route 195 (SR 195) between Interstate 8 (I-8) and US Highway 95 (US 95) in Yuma County, Arizona.

The meeting was held from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm on September 17, 2009, at Gila Ridge High School, 7151 East 24th Street, Yuma, Arizona. Invitations were extended to a total of 209 people including agency representatives affiliated with 47 potentially affected agencies; 101 people signed in at the meeting.

## Public Notice

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Notice of the public scoping meeting at Gila Ridge High School was distributed by the following methods:

- Published public meeting advertisement on September 3, 2009, and September 14, 2009, in *The Yuma Sun* newspaper and on September 4, 2009, and September 11, 2009, in the *Bajo el Sol* newspaper
- Disseminated news release to local area media organizations (newspapers, radio stations, and television stations)
- Posted public meeting advertisement on the project Web site ([www.azdot.gov/highways/Projects/SR195\\_I8\\_to\\_US95/Index.asp](http://www.azdot.gov/highways/Projects/SR195_I8_to_US95/Index.asp))

Copies of the public notification materials are included in Appendix A.

## Meeting Format, Materials, and Presentation

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Meeting participants were asked to sign in and were given a project handout, a question card, and a comment sheet. The handout provided information on the project location, background, progress to date, and schedule. Participants were instructed to use the question cards to submit questions they wished to have answered during the meeting. They were also asked to fill out comment sheets and to submit them either at the end of the meeting or by mail, e-mail, or fax by October 2, 2009.

The meeting began with a welcome address by the ADOT Communications and Community Partnerships Public Information Officer, Lucy Shipp. Lucy introduced the ADOT Yuma District Engineer, Paul Patané. Paul gave a presentation describing the study, the purpose and need, the study process, and work to date. Jackie Noblitt, the consultant project manager with Stanley Consultants, presented the alternatives recommended for further engineering and environmental study. A question-and-answer session was conducted after the presentation.

Copies of the sign-in sheets for the public meeting are provided in Appendix B and the meeting handouts and copies of the exhibits are included in Appendix C.

# Summary of Questions and Comments

## Questions and Comments

Forty-five question cards were submitted during the meeting and addressed by the study team during the question-and-answer session. Table 1 lists these questions by topic; the questions are not listed in the order in which they were submitted during the meeting. All questions submitted at the meeting are included in Appendix D and are summarized below.

Many of the questions received during the meeting addressed the potential type of traffic and traffic volumes for the planned extension of SR 195. Questions were also submitted regarding community access, safety, technical specifications, costs of alternatives, and potential turn restrictions for Alternative B-3 (Araby Road At-Grade). A few questions were submitted regarding future plans, access, and railroad-crossings.

Table 1. Questions Submitted

<b>Questions Regarding Costs of Alternatives</b>	
1.	The cost of Alternative B-3 is artificially low because it does not include needed improvement on Hwy 95 East. Why is this the case?
2.	Do you have a cost analysis of all routes and if so what are the cost of each?
3.	Will the study/future documents include data and analysis for the following: a. Fuel costs paid/fuel consumed amount using the various alternatives, (including by trucks) b. Carbon emissions of the various alternatives
4.	Will this project be a P3 funding project – a. Will there be partnering with other agencies? b. Private funding?
5.	Will any of the alternatives receive stimulus funds?
<b>Questions Regarding Potential Type of Traffic and Traffic Volumes</b>	
1.	Is there any concern about the fact there are 3 schools, especially the high school with new drivers pulling out on Araby? Mixed with farm traffic?
2.	Will the extension of SR 195 from 24 <sup>th</sup> St north to Hwy 95 cause heavy traffic flow in our residential streets? I think it will cause turning into our subdivision hectic.
3.	Where is it anticipated that the traffic will be going to? North on US 95? And what percentage of this traffic is projected to be trucks?
4.	What type of traffic do you anticipate (truck, car, heavy truck) etc?
5.	On Alternative F, has the increase of winter traffic been taken into consideration? The Fortuna bridge is already clogged up during the winter months.
6.	Did the speaker say 500 trucks to use Araby Rd to connect to Hwy 95? Cresta Gila has only access to Araby Road – no back roads (except sandy desert!) Do you want to have 500 trucks going by your home?
7.	Is there anything preventing trucks from using Fortuna Road today, as the road signs direct?
8.	How many heavy vehicles are estimated per day [on Fortuna Road]?
9.	What percent of the truck volumes from Mexico go west, north, and east at I-8?
10.	What is the current arrival/truck volumes entering our country at San Luis Port? What percentage of trucks do not have American license?
11.	What are the current truck volumes annually on Araby Road from I-8 to Hwy 95?
12.	Are the 2029 truck volumes at San Luis II one-way into our country or two-way at the border?
<b>Questions Regarding Turn Restrictions for the Alternative B-3 Araby Road</b>	
1.	How are you going to handle people going in and out of the Bluffs on Araby? The rumor is we won't be able to make a left. (North)
2.	If no left turn from Bluffs, does that mean no left turns from Cresta Gila homes? How will we get to I-8?

*Continued*

3.	If you restrict left turns north on Araby you would require residents to travel to a point to make a U-turn. Would not this pose increased danger to the drivers and others? Is ADOT considering a traffic signal for the Araby/Telegraph Intersection?
<b>Questions Regarding Community Concerns and Safety</b>	
1.	Any consideration in current or future study concerning efficiency regarding energy expenditure; number of signaled intersections versus free flow?
2.	Do you build the roads to prevent fatalities? Safety in mind and design?
3.	Do you really expect school busses to make u-turns in order to drive their pick-up routes along Araby and has the impact of all the busses from the bus barn on 24 <sup>th</sup> been considered?
4.	It seems that citizen opinion has not been a concern to ADOT. If so the Araby option would be eliminated. If this is the case, what is the point to these meetings?
5.	Don't you feel that with so many young high school drivers using the 24 <sup>th</sup> Street and Araby it will cause many accidents?
6.	Will you do a study on the risk of fatalities, and if no why not?
7.	Again, was there a study on the risk of fatalities for each alternative? (My question was not answered)
8.	What changes would be made to Araby Rd near the Cresta Gila neighborhood? What will access be to the area and what right-of-ways will need to be obtained?
9.	Were there any studies on the impact on human life? In other words, was there a study on the risk of fatalities on each alternative?
10.	The Citizens of Yuma have been concerned about the truck traffic on the Araby corridor for a decade and have expressed this to ADOT. This has been "truck restricted" since 1999. Why would ADOT want to ignore the City of Yuma and citizens concerns and connect SR/195 via Araby Rd since several neighborhoods (Bluffs and Cresta Gila) only access is off Araby Rd? This is a major problem!
11.	Yuma is trying to attract more businesses and people to move to Yuma as being an attractive place to live and work. Is consideration being given to impact to communities and neighborhoods on the alternatives? I don't see this as an evaluation/consideration item.
<b>Questions Regarding Public Suggested Alternatives</b>	
1.	While US 95 remains in its current condition with widens to Aberdeen Road, a Controlled Access road south of I-8 and north of Dome Valley will exist. What guarantee if any do we have that planning and zoning will not use a controlled access "ADOT" requirement from the Gila Valley property owners on 95 routes?
2.	If the option of Fortuna is used, how will ADOT address the railroad crossing as a passing train has the very real possibility of backing up that volume beyond the 95/Fortuna intersection?
3.	Did you take into consideration a rail line – or logistics center in Wellton on I-8? 2012 – 2-4% increase in freight trucks – rail.
<b>Questions Regarding Technical Information</b>	
1.	What does "Section 4f Properties" in the handout mean?
2.	Is Araby Road wide enough now or will you need to widen it north of 24 <sup>th</sup> St?
3.	By whom is the Araby to Hwy 95 connection preferred? A great deal of improvement has taken place along Araby since it was first designated. It's time to look for alternative routes that do not involve residential areas. Look at alternative F as a near term solution and alternative H as the long term solution.
4.	There seems to be considerable objection to using Araby (B). Would it not be better to use Alternatives F or H and not engender rancor of the residents? Would it not be better to have our support? We'd rather work with you than against you.
5.	Alternatives B3, A and F make such an impact the community, why not H? We are taxpayers that pay for the roads and ADOT salaries.
6.	What is the width of Araby Road now north of 24 <sup>th</sup> ? Is it more than 100 ft wide?
7.	On Alternative "B" what does elevated, depressed and at grade mean?
8.	What is the design capacity of San Luis II port of entry?
9.	Have all alternative been considered for over-sized loads? 16 x 16
<b>Questions Regarding the Meeting Questions and Minutes</b>	
1.	Where will factual responses to each question today be published?
2.	Is there an audio recording or transcript of this hearing?

## Public Comments Received

In addition to questions raised during the meeting, 36 completed comment forms were received the night of the meeting. After the meeting, 26 completed comment forms, 9 letters, and 22 e-mails were received. Table 2 includes a summary of the general written public comments by alternative; comments are not listed in the order in which they were received. All written public comments received are included in Appendix E and are summarized below. Of the 93 comments received, many indicated opposition or support for a particular alternative, many indicated a primary or secondary choice, and some did not prefer one alternative in favor of another.

Public comments regarding Alternative A (Avenue 3E) primarily addressed access to irrigation facilities and agricultural areas; an increase in the existing traffic congestion during the winter vegetable season; and the amount and cost of construction involved. Fourteen people supported this alternative and 28 people opposed this alternative.

Public comments regarding Alternative B-3 (Araby Road At-Grade) primarily addressed access to residential communities, schools, and agricultural areas; safety associated with access to these areas; increased traffic, noise, and air pollution for the proposed corridor; and the cost of construction for this alternative. Sixteen people supported for this alternative and 52 people opposed this alternative.

Public comments regarding Alternative F (Fortuna Road) primarily addressed the existing traffic congestion, the potential negative effects on residential communities, and the construction of necessary infrastructure. The majority of the respondents considered this alternative the best temporary solution. Three people supported this alternative and 10 people opposed this alternative.

Public comments regarding Alternative H (A Canal to Fortuna Road) primarily addressed the impact on residential communities and agricultural areas, the amount and cost of construction needed, and possible benefits to the community in the form of reduced traffic congestion. The majority of respondents considered this alternative the best long-term solution. Forty-three people supported this alternative and 8 people opposed this alternative.

The No-Build alternative was supported by 4 commentors and opposed by 12.

Table 2. Public Comments

Topic	Comment
Alternative A: Avenue 3E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This route would restrict access to irrigation facilities and agricultural areas.</li> <li>• The cost estimate for this alternative is incomplete and therefore misleading.</li> <li>• The route would entail major reconstruction of the I-8 ramp and surrounding area.</li> <li>• There are already traffic issues during the winter. This would compound those problems further.</li> <li>• Not a convenient route; would require traffic to “back track”.</li> <li>• This is an existing commercial route that connects easily.</li> <li>• This is the least expensive alternative and therefore the best.</li> <li>• There is already a truck stop at this exit.</li> <li>• This alternative would require the least amount of construction and would have the least impact on the community.</li> </ul>

*Continued*

Table 2. Public Comments

Topic	Comment
Alternative B-3: Araby Road At_Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricts access to existing residential communities, schools, and agricultural areas.</li> <li>• Creates major safety issues concerning access to residential communities and schools.</li> <li>• Negative effect on property values, especially for residential communities.</li> <li>• Increased noise and air pollution in populated area.</li> <li>• Increased traffic congestion, especially in the winter.</li> <li>• Araby Road has been designated as a restricted/limited use corridor and should remain as such.</li> <li>• Stone Ridge Church would lose access to Araby Road as well as a significant portion of the west side of its property, which would interfere with the Church’s planned expansion.</li> <li>• This is the least expensive and most direct route.</li> <li>• Originally chosen route and should remain as chosen route.</li> <li>• This Alternative would avoid the more heavily trafficked areas of the other Alternatives, minimize confusion for drivers and require less construction.</li> <li>• There is already a railroad track overpass for Araby Road.</li> <li>• The residential areas along this Alternative are sufficiently far from the road and warrant no more special interest than the communities along the other Alternatives.</li> </ul>
Alternative F: Fortuna Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Already a congested area, especially in winter with farm traffic and older citizens who “winter” in the area.</li> <li>• Residential areas that would be negatively impacted regarding access and air and noise pollution.</li> <li>• Fortuna Road would require widening and repaving as well as a new overpass for the railroad all of which would be very expensive.</li> <li>• Necessary infrastructure already exists at I-8/Fortuna Road exit.</li> <li>• New railroad crossing/overpass is needed anyway.</li> <li>• Overall best route as a temporary/short-term solution.</li> </ul>
Alternative H: A Canal to Fortuna Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This Alternative requires the most construction and is also the most expensive.</li> <li>• Still crosses railroad track at Fortuna, would cause increased congestion. There is no need for an expensive new road when so many viable Alternatives already exist.</li> <li>• This Alternative would still place a burden on Fortuna Road and would involve costly upgrades to the existing railroad crossing on Fortuna.</li> <li>• Does not interfere with agricultural, residential, or industrial areas; at least not to the extent the other Alternatives would interfere.</li> <li>• Reasonable route with least effect on private land.</li> <li>• Will help lighten traffic burden along other roads.</li> <li>• Most support as long term option.</li> </ul>
No Build Alternative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This option would do nothing to resolve existing problems with traffic congestion.</li> <li>• Alternative is needed while the land is available.</li> <li>• Other Alternatives would still be used, but without the benefit of any upgrades.</li> <li>• Do not have money necessary to build, especially when other alternatives exist already.</li> </ul>
General Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is some general concern that the cost estimates for the alternatives are incomplete and therefore cannot be properly considered.</li> <li>• There is a general call to keep the large trucks out of the City of Yuma at all costs.</li> </ul>

### Agency Comments Received

In addition to the written public comments received, several agencies submitted comments the night of or after the meeting. Complete written agency comments received are included in Appendix F; these comments are listed in Table 3 and are summarized below.

The Arizona Department of Agriculture found that no significant impacts on protected native plants would occur. The Department recommended that if any protected native plants are found and removal is required, such plants be properly relocated.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) commented that Alternative H appears to impact AGFD's existing Region IV office and if ADOT selects Alternative H, AGFD would request compensation for the anticipated impacts to the office and other existing infrastructure.

The City of Yuma most strongly opposed Alternative B-3 (Araby Road At-Grade) due to potential access and safety. The City very strongly opposes Alternative A and the No Build Alternative. The City very strongly supports Alternative H, stating that it would be the least disruptive to private land.

The North Gila Valley Irrigation and Drainage District strongly opposed Alternatives A and B-3, since these alternatives would divide the irrigation district. The District supported Alternative H as the long-term solution.

A Yuma County Supervisor opposed Alternative B-3 and prefers Alternative H. The Supervisor did not view the No Build Alternative as an appropriate or desired alternative.

The Yuma Irrigation District strongly opposed Alternatives A and B-3, since these alternatives would divide the irrigation district and make access to the irrigation works difficult. The District supported the construction of Alternative H as the best long-term connection route.

The Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization strongly opposed Alternative B-3. YMPO opposed Alternatives A and F. YMPO supported Alternative H as the preferred long-term route.

Table 3. Agency Comments

Agency	Comments
Arizona Department of Agriculture	Found that there does not appear there will be any significant impact on protected native plants. The ADA requests that if any such protected native plants are encountered, regardless of which alternative is selected, that such plants be preserved. Furthermore, the ADA suggests that the removal of existing vegetation within the project area is minimized to the greatest possible extent; that cactus and other protected plants be salvaged and/or replanted; and that material generated (motor oil, paint, et.) or used be disposed of properly or used in such a way as to minimize impacts on vegetation.
Arizona Department of Game and Fish	The Proposed Alternative H appears to potentially impact AGFD's existing Region IV office. Alternative H would be aligned from I-8, adjacent to the A Canal, connecting with Fortuna Road at US 95. The AGFD Region IV office also sits adjacent to the A Canal and could be within a potential right-of-way necessary for the proposed expansion of SR 195. If ADOT selects Alternative H, AGFD would request compensation commensurate with the anticipated impacts to AGFD's Region IV office and other existing infrastructure. These potential impacts could include costs associated with building and infrastructure demolition, renovation, and/or relocation. The Region IV Office was constructed in 1991, with the following approximate construction costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Office building = \$378,000</li> <li>· Secondary office building and warehouse = \$185,000</li> <li>· Boat warehouse = \$180,000</li> <li>· Equipment canopy = \$10,000</li> </ul> Additionally, the land on which the AGFD Region IV office sits is currently owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Although AGFD and BLM have been working toward transferring land ownership to AGFD for several years, this process has not been completed and currently remains property of the BLM.
City of Yuma	Three major facts that should be very clear from prior input and from the testimony and comments at the September 17, 2009, Public Information Meeting. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. ALL local communities and affected government bodies, including the Yuma</li> </ol>

Table 3. Agency Comments

Agency	Comments
	<p>Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO) UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSE Alternative B (Araby Road) as the connection between SR 195 and US 95.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. ALL the above government entities also UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORT Alternative H as the best route to connect SR 195 to US 95.</li> <li>3. ALL the above government bodies recognized that Alternative H is the ONLY corridor that can be built solely on vacant desert land that is entirely owned by government agencies. All other Alternatives will require the purchase and demolition of private homes and property and will severely disrupt agricultural operations.</li> </ol>
	<p>I personally, (Councilman Paul Johnson) and on behalf of my constituents, must MOST STRONGLY OPPOSE Alternative B-3 (which would use Araby Road to connect SR 195 from I-8 to US 95) for the reasons set forth below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The density of development north of I-8 near Araby Road has drastically increased and changed in character since the 1999 IGA was signed.</li> <li>2. Access for emergency vehicles to the colleges, schools and subdivisions will be severely reduced, if not blocked, if Alternative B-3 is chosen to connect US 95 to SR 195.</li> <li>3. Farming is the basis of about 40% of Yuma County’s economy. If Alternative B3 (Araby Road) is selected as the route to connect SR 195 to US 95, that choice will have severe adverse impacts on farming operations.</li> <li>4. Contrary to the statements on page 64 of the 2009 SR 195 Report (bottom line and other locations), it has been official Yuma City policy since at least 1997 that trucks and traffic from SR 195 should NOT be allowed on Araby Road between I-8 and US 95.</li> </ol>
	<p>I personally, (Councilman Paul Johnson) and on behalf of my constituents, VERY STRONGLY SUPPORT ADOT’s Alternative H (‘A’ Canal and UPRR from I-8 to US 95 near Fortuna Road) for the reasons set forth below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Virtually all the land necessary to build Alternative H is publicly owned vacant desert.</li> <li>2. Alternative H has the advantage of having no privately owned buildings along that route and only one government owned building.</li> <li>3. Alternative H follows the same route that this City has shown as its preferred way to connect SR 195 to US 95 since 1997.</li> <li>4. All local communities and affected government bodies UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORT Alternative H.</li> </ol>
	<p>I personally, (Councilman Paul Johnson) and on behalf of my constituents, VERY STRONGLY OPPOSE Alternative A (Avenue 3E) and the “No Build” option (I-8 west to 16<sup>th</sup> Street – US 95) because, in spite of their deceptive simplicity, they will NOT work for their intended purpose of keeping trucks and traffic from SR 195 from using Araby Road to get to and from US 95. Alternative A and the “No Build” option appear to be attractive and low cost because they use existing roads. That is deceptive and false because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alternative A forces trucks and traffic to take a detour of at least 6.8 miles out of their shortest, natural pathway between US 95 and the SR195.</li> <li>2. Alternative A requires traffic to turn out of its natural direction of travel and drive 3 ½ miles out of its way and then doubles back 3 ½ miles. Drivers simply will not do that.</li> <li>3. Alternative A will also require the widening of Avenue 3E from 2 lanes to 5 lanes.</li> <li>4. The “No Build” Alternative forces trucks and traffic to detour at least 9.3 miles out of their natural, shortest route between US 95 and SR 195.</li> <li>5. The “No Build” Alternative requires traffic to make the same turn out of its natural direction.</li> <li>6. Alternative A and the “No Build” Alternative would have the most impact on agricultural operations.</li> </ol>
	<p>The 2009 SR 195 Report grossly distorts and vastly overstates the cost estimates of all alternatives with routes that use Interstate 8 east of Araby Road.</p>

Table 3. Agency Comments

Agency	Comments
	<p>See attached: <b>1A.</b> Resolution No. R97-61; <b>1B.</b> 1997 Major Roadways Plan Map; <b>1C.</b> 1997 Truck Routes Map; <b>2A.</b> Resolution No. R2002-34; <b>2B.</b> Major Roadways Map; <b>2C.</b> Truck Routes Map; <b>3A.</b> Resolution No. R2005-41; <b>3B.</b> Major Roadways Plan – 2005; <b>4.</b> Resolution No. R2008-04; <b>5.</b> Resolution No. 2008-05; <b>6.</b> Resolution No. R2009-61; <b>7A.</b> 8/6/09 Correspondence from City of Yuma to Arizona State Transportation Board; <b>7B.</b> Photograph of Exit 12 sign; <b>8.</b> 8/3/09 Correspondence from Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization; <b>9.</b> Statute reference.</p>
North Gila Valley Irrigation and Drainage District	<p>The District strongly opposes Alternatives A and B-3, as both would divide the Yuma Irrigation District. This division of the YID would render operation and maintenance of the irrigation system works and facilities a near impossibility. The agricultural industry in the entire Gila Valley would also suffer serious adverse impacts with the construction of Alternative A or B-3 due to the restriction of access to production areas. The District supports the construction of Alternative H to Fortuna Road with the construction of a railroad crossing at Fortuna Road as the long term connection route between SR-195 and US 95.</p>
Yuma County Supervisor	<p>The Yuma community opposes Alternative B-3 and prefers Alternative H. Although Alternative H does not appear to be the best option on paper, the wishes of the Yuma community must be given weight in the determination of the most appropriate alternative. The No Build Alternative is not an appropriate or desired alternative for Yuma County.</p>
Yuma Irrigation District Resolution 2009-3, attached in Appendix F	<p>The District strongly opposes Alternatives A and B-3 to connect SR-195 to US 95. Both of these Alternatives would divide the District. Such division would render operation and maintenance of the irrigation system works and facilities a near impossibility. The inability to operate and maintain the system, exacerbated in times of emergency, could result in property damage and significant human safety risks.</p> <p>The District supports the construction of Alternative H to Fortuna Road with the construction of a railroad crossing at Fortuna Road as the long-term connection route between SR-195 and US 95.</p>
Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization	<p>The Executive Board voted unanimously to recommend the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. YMPO strongly opposes Alternative B-3, the Araby Road Alternative</li> <li>2. YMPO opposes Alternative A, the Avenue 3E Alternative</li> <li>3. YMPO opposes Alternative F, the Fortuna Road Alternative</li> <li>4. YMPO supports Alternative H, the 'A' Canal to Fortuna Road Alternative, as the preferred long term route, to initially be constructed as a two lane surface roadway, until such time as traffic and ADOT funding availability warrants further expansion</li> </ol>

**APPENDIX A**

**PUBLIC NOTIFICATION MATERIALS**

**APPENDIX B**

**PUBLIC MEETING SIGN-IN SHEETS**

**APPENDIX C**

**PUBLIC MEETING HANDOUTS AND EXHIBITS**

**APPENDIX D**

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AT PUBLIC MEETING**

**APPENDIX E**

**WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**APPENDIX F**

**WRITTEN AGENCY COMMENTS**