

CHAPTER 4
AGENCY AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Environmental Assessment (EA) coordination process described in this chapter provided interested agencies, organizations, and the public the opportunity to comment on potential effects of the construction and operation of the Proposed Action.

As the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 1050.1F recommend for an EA, an agency and public involvement process was conducted. This process provided the opportunity for agency, organization, and public input regarding the Proposed Action analyzed in this EA. The agency, organization, and public involvement process was initiated to:

- » Provide information about the Proposed Action's purpose and need and the alternatives the EA discusses.
- » Obtain feedback about the above information from agencies, organizations, and the public interested in and affected by the Proposed Action (i.e., interested parties).
- » Inform those interested parties that the EA will provide a full and fair discussion of project-related environmental effects.
- » Provide timely public notices to interested parties so that they may submit comments and participate in public open meetings concerning the Proposed Action.
- » Record comments received from interested parties.

4.2 AGENCY AND ORGANIZATION COORDINATION

On October 12, 2021, the Department of Aviation (DOA) submitted, via email, invitations to comment on the scope of work for this Environmental Assessment. In total, six agencies and organizations were contacted and invited to provide comments on the proposed project, of which, two responded with comments. The comments provided from the two agencies were incorporated into the environmental studies where applicable. **Appendix I** includes the requests for comment sent to the agencies and organizations, confirmation of electronic delivery, and copies of responses received.

4.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The DOA published a public notice in the Austin-American Statesmen on August 8, 2021 announcing that it was holding a public scoping meeting on September 9, 2021 for the Proposed Action. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the public scoping meeting was held virtually via Zoom and occurred on Thursday,

September 9, 2021 from 6:30pm Central Daylight Time (CDT) to 7:30pm CDT. The format of the public scoping meeting was a virtual presentation followed by a question and answer session. The virtual presentation covered a brief overview of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the NEPA process, the purpose and need for the project, and the proposed scope of work for the environmental analysis of potentially affected resource categories, along with how to provide comments during the 30-day early consultation period. Members of the public had an opportunity to ask questions and converse with DOA staff and the EA consultant team. In addition, members of the public were given the opportunity to submit written comments during the scoping meeting. The DOA received three written comments during the public scoping meeting and five public comments during the 30-day comment period that ended on October 12, 2021. **Appendix I** includes the summary of the virtual public scoping meeting.

4.4 DISTRIBUTION OF DRAFT EA

The DOA published a notice of availability for the Draft EA in the Austin-American Statesmen on February 22, 2022. As **Table 4-1** shows, the Draft EA was made available to the public and agencies for a 45-day review period during normal business hours and on the DOA website.

**TABLE 4-1
DRAFT EA AVAILABLE LOCATIONS**

Location Name	Address	Draft EA Copy Type
Austin City Hall	301 West 2 nd Street, Austin TX 78701	Hard Copy
DOA Website	https://www.speakupaustin.org/aus-ea	Electronic
Austin Public Library – Ruiz Branch	1600 Grove Boulevard, Austin TX 78741	Hard Copy
City of Austin Department of Aviation	2716 Spirit of Texas Drive, Austin TX 78719	Hard Copy

Sources: RS&H, 2022.

4.5 PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT EA

During the 45-day public comment period on the Draft EA, the DOA provided agencies and the public with the opportunity to attend two public meetings to learn more about the Draft EA, to ask questions of DOA staff regarding the Proposed Project and the contents of the Draft EA.

The DOA utilized a variety of methods to inform agencies and the public about the public meetings. These methods were extensive and are identified in **Appendix J**. The first public meeting was a virtual meeting held on Zoom on Wednesday, 23

March 2022 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm Central Daylight Time. Approximately 53 members of the public attended this virtual meeting. The second public meeting was an in-person at DOA offices on Saturday, 26 March 2022 from 10:00am to 1:00pm Central Daylight Time. Approximately 22 members of the public attended this in-person meeting.

Agencies and the public had the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft EA for the 45-day period between 22 February 2022 and 7 April 2022. Comments were submitted to the DOA using the following four methods:

- » Online
- » Project Open House
- » By Mail
- » By Email

A total of 23 comment submissions were received on the Draft EA. A copy of all comments and responses to those comments are provided in **Appendix K**.

4.6 FINAL EA

The Final EA will be made available at the locations identified in **Table 4-1** and on the DOA website at <https://www.speakupaustin.org/aus-ea>.

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