

## 6.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH

This chapter summarizes the public engagement activities and the agency coordination process that occurred beginning with the submission of the Notice of Preparation in November 2023 through the release of this Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) in April 2025.

### 6.1 Notice of Preparation

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a Notice of Preparation (NOP) serves as the first formal step in the EIR process and in the agency and public involvement process. SJJPA submitted the NOP for the Madera HSR Station Full-Build Project Phase 3 to the State Clearinghouse and the Madera County Clerk on November 22, 2023.

Notification letters were also mailed via United States Postal Service first-class mail to 188 responsible and trustee agencies, additional organizations, interested parties, nearby landowners, and nearby current residents. For a complete list please see Appendix F, Public Outreach. Additionally, the NOP was made publicly accessible via the SJJPA webpage, allowing the general public to review the document and submit comments. Appendix F, *Notice of Preparation and Scoping Summary Memorandum*, includes a copy of the notification letter used for the NOP mailing and the full NOP. The public comment period ended on January 5, 2024, at 5pm.

### 6.2 Public Scoping Process

The scoping process led by SJJPA engaged agencies, organizations, and the public, and provided them with an opportunity to offer input on issues to be examined and included in the Draft EIR for the Madera HSR Station Full-Build Project Phase 3. Throughout the scoping process, SJJPA outreach efforts encouraged community members and stakeholders to attend and actively participate in the scoping meeting. Notification materials were distributed via multiple channels and included an overview of the Project, scoping period dates, meeting details, and scoping comment submission instructions. This multi-channel outreach effort ensured diverse stakeholder participation and input, laying a foundation for addressing community and environmental concerns in the Draft EIR. Attachment F provides further details, including outreach materials, meeting presentations, and comments received.

#### 6.2.1 Scoping Meeting

The notification letters invited agencies and stakeholders to a virtual scoping meeting on December 13, 2023, from 9:30 am to 11:30 am via Zoom. Email notifications were sent on November 28, 2023, to the Project's email subscribers and key organizations, with a reminder on December 12, 2023. A dedicated Project webpage was created, hosting scoping materials, the NOP, and comment submission instructions. Social media campaigns on Facebook and Instagram promoted the scoping meeting, with posts on December 11, 2023.

The virtual scoping meeting featured a presentation on the Project and CEQA EIR process, followed by a virtual open house format during which representatives from public agencies, community

1 organizations, stakeholders, and interested individuals could ask questions and provide feedback.  
 2 For those individuals unable to attend, comments were accepted by mail or email until the close of  
 3 the comment period, and scoping materials were made available on the Project webpage. Spanish  
 4 interpretation was provided to ensure accessibility. Further details such as complete meeting  
 5 summaries along with the meeting materials are included in Appendix F, *Notice of Preparation and*  
 6 *Scoping Memorandum*.

## 7 **6.2.2 Scoping Comments**

8 During the scoping period, one scoping comment was received from California Department of Fish  
 9 and Wildlife (CDFW). Appendix F, *Notice of Preparation and Scoping Memorandum*, includes the full  
 10 letter submitted by CDFW. Highlighting concerns about impacts on special-status species and  
 11 potential lake or streambed alterations. CDFW recommended analyzing these impacts in the Draft  
 12 EIR, consulting with United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and including measurable mitigation  
 13 measures.

## 14 **6.3 Ongoing Public Outreach**

15 To keep stakeholders up to date, a Project webpage was developed and updated at every major  
 16 Project milestone, including prior public meetings and as major project updates become available.  
 17 The webpage features the latest project information, including fact sheets, project maps, other  
 18 collateral materials, presentations, display materials, and video recordings of past meetings.

### 19 **6.3.1 Tribal Coordination**

20 In November 2023, ICF, on behalf of the SJPA, initiated coordination with Native American tribes by  
 21 requesting a Sacred Lands File search and CEQA Tribal Consultation List from the Native American  
 22 Heritage Commission (NAHC). In December 2023, the NAHC reported that the Sacred Lands File  
 23 search yielded negative results, meaning no known sacred lands or culturally significant sites were  
 24 identified within the project area. The NAHC provided a list of 16 tribal contacts in Madera County:

25 Tom Zizzo, Tribal Administrator;	34 Jessica Murga, Tribal Secretary;
26 Joel Marvin, Vice Chairperson;	35 Erolinda Perez, Tribal Administrator;
27 Elizabeth Kipp, Chairperson;	36 Tracey Hopkins, Chairperson;
28 Robert Ledger, Chairperson;	37 Heather Airey, Tribal Historic Preservation
29 Mary Stalter, Environmental/Heritage	38 Officer;
30 Manager;	39 Sandra Chapman, Chairperson;
31 Fred Beihn, Chairperson;	40 Brenda Lavell, Chairperson;
32 John Murga, Tribal Historian;	41 Neil Peyron, Chairperson; and
33 Timothy Perez, Tribal Compliance Officer;	42 Kenneth Woodrow, Chairperson.

43 Subsequently, SJPA sent formal consultation opportunity letters directly to these tribal contacts,  
 44 including Project details and a location map, as required under Public Resources Code Section  
 45 21080.3.1 (Assembly Bill 52), inviting feedback and consultation. While the Sacred Lands File search  
 46 yielded no identified sacred lands, the outcomes of the tribal consultations are ongoing and will be  
 47 integrated into the Project's impact assessments and mitigation planning in the Final EIR.

## 6.4 Public and Agency Comment Process

Throughout the Project development process, public and agency comments have been collected through a variety of methods, including orally at in-person meetings, through mail, and via Project email. During the official scoping comment period, comments were accepted via comment cards submitted during the meeting or mailed in, email, or orally. SJJPA conducted significant outreach efforts including sending e-mails and made phone calls to offer to meet with property owners located within the vicinity of the Project, either in-person or virtually to discuss the Project. As part of the outreach efforts, SJJPA presented to the Curran Family Limited Partnership Properties on October 24, 2024 to provide an overview of the Project and review potential impacts to parcels owned by Curran Family Limited Partnership. Additionally, SJJPA presented to the Madera County Transportation Commission on October 23, 2024 to provide an update on the environmental analysis for Phase 3 of the Project and funding partnerships with the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Infrastructure Project Assistance (Mega) Program. Further details such as complete meeting summaries along with the meeting materials are included in Appendix F, *Notice of Preparation and Scoping Memorandum*.

## 6.5 Commenting On This Draft Environmental Impact Report

This Draft EIR is being made available for public review for a 45-day comment period. The Notice of Availability (NOA) has been distributed to affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties in accordance with Section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. The NOA has also been published in local newspapers (The Madera Tribune and Madera County Farm Bureau), sent by email to individuals who requested to subscribe to the Project email list as well as organizations that were identified by SJJPA and the consulting team, and direct mailings to responsible and trustee agencies, organizations, interested parties, nearby landowners and current residents. The Draft EIR is available for review and download online at SJJPA's webpage <https://sjjpa.com/madera-station-relocation-project/>. Hard and electronic copies of this Draft EIR are available for public review at the following locations:

- San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, 949 East Channel Street, Stockton, California, 95202
- Madera County Library, 121 North G Street, Madera, California 93637

SJJPA will conduct one in-person open house meeting to provide information about the Draft EIR and respond to general questions about the environmental analysis. A presentation summarizing the Project and Draft EIR will be provided, and staff will be available to answer questions of general nature. All formal comments on the Draft EIR must be submitted in writing or verbally to a court reporter at the open house meeting or via mail or email (see below for details) for consideration. Spanish translation services will also be available. The open house meeting for the Draft EIR will be held at the Madera County Community College (30277 Ave 12, Madera, CA 93638) on April 30, 2025 from 5:30pm until 7:00 pm.

Formal comments and questions submitted at the public open house will not receive a response during the public open house but will be addressed in the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR). Comments on this Draft EIR can be sent via project email [info@maderastation.com](mailto:info@maderastation.com) or mailed to the address shown herein:

- Mail: San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, 949 East Channel Street, Stockton, California 95202
- Web Form: <https://sjjpa.com/madera-station-relocation-project/>

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