

APPENDIX C

Socorro Scoping Meeting

Drinking Water Project EIS Scoping Meeting Summary Memorandum

Socorro Public Meeting 9/28/99

Disposition of Comments Received

The scoping summary memoranda prepared following the public scoping meetings for the Drinking Water Project detailed the issues raised by public comment at those meetings. This memorandum addresses each of the comments received, and states the action that will be taken to address each comment. The verbatim comment text is shown in a table, with the action to be taken shown to the right. In some cases, the comments are presented slightly out of order (from the original scoping memorandum [file /socorr~3.doc]) to allow for grouping of similar comments.

Background: The Water Resources Division of the City of Albuquerque Public Works Department held a scoping meeting for the Drinking Water Project, as part of NEPA compliance requirements for public input in the draft Environmental Impact Statement process. The meeting was held from 6-8pm on Tuesday, 9/28/99 at the Macey Conference Center, on the campus of New Mexico Tech, 801 Leroy Place, Socorro, NM. The meeting consisted of an “open house” format, with 6 display stations of project information, poster boards, and maps. The intent of the “open house” format was to allow the public to browse at their leisure and interest level, obtain information, and ask questions.

Presentation:

The displays at the six stations were organized topically as follows:

- 1) Overall Water Resources Management Strategy, including Aquifer Storage and Recovery
- 2) Provisional Action Alternatives A, B, C – Combining Diversion Options with Chappell Road/
Site P
- 3) Delivery of Water – How the City of Albuquerque Plans on Delivering SJC Water
- 4) Diversion Options – Angostura, New Surface Diversion, Radial Collector Wells, In-River
Subsurface Collector
- 5) NEPA Process, Scoping Process
- 6) Plant Siting Options with Drawing and Picture of What Plant Would Look Like and Evaluation
Criteria

In addition to either a portable tape recorder or human recorder, a flip chart was placed at each station to record public comments and questions. An expert manned each station to answer questions and records comments.

A presentation kicked off the meeting, in which John Stomp, Manager of the Water Resources Division, gave a project overview, and Lori Robertson and other representatives from the US Bureau of Reclamation gave an overview statement of the NEPA process and encouraged public participation.

Hirst Company Role:

The Hirst Company provided media, public relations and public involvement support to the public meeting as required, including:

Socorro Public Meeting 9/28/99

- 1) Ad design development and placement in the following publications:
El Defensor Chieftain/Socorro – Sat 9/11, Wed 9/15, Sat 9/18, Wed 9/22, and Sat 9/25
Albuquerque Journal - Sun 9/12, Wed 9/15, Sun 9/19, Wed 9/22
- 2) Coordination of legal notice placement in same editions;
- 3) Development of mailing list and distribution to key stakeholders in the Socorro area;
- 4) Draft of press release to Mayor's Office for distribution to all major media outlets;
- 5) Counsel on attendees, contact with specific opinion leaders, and mobilization of attendees;
- 6) Counsel on information, assistance with preparation of materials and presentation.

Attendees:

There were 14 attendees at the 9/28 meeting. In addition, there were 15 project-related attendees: John Stomp of the City of Albuquerque; 2 representatives of the Bureau of Reclamation; 8 engineer/NEPA-related representatives from Parsons, CH2MHill, and Ecosystems; 3 Hirst Company representatives; and 1 Cooney Productions representative.

**Drinking Water Project
Socorro Public Scoping Meeting 9/28/99
Emerging Issues/Public Relations Implications**

During this meeting, several issues emerged as common public concerns or comments regarding the Drinking Water Project:

Potential For Decreased Flows Downstream

The Hirst Company believes city materials and presentations need to be revised to add the San Juan-Chama delivery effect on the amount of river flow downstream. This was the main issue among a small group of attendees at the Socorro meeting, and can be presumed to be a significant issue from other area residents given the geographic location south of Albuquerque. This information should also to be imparted to the media in a straightforward manner. We recommend an issue brief on this topic.

Water Quality

As at the Albuquerque meeting, many attendees expressed concerns regarding water quality. The concerns did not address how it would taste (since this use of SJC water for municipal supply does not apply to downstream residents) but what the impact of this project would be on downstream water quality. The Hirst Company recommends that the City address these concerns in future project materials, both for area residents' and Pueblos' benefits. As noted in the Albuquerque summary, we recommend an issue brief on water quality, both taste and downstream effects.

Environmental Concerns

The issue of river flow reserve for the silvery minnow continues to be of concern to the public. Given these comments and recent media coverage, the Hirst Company believes the proposition beginning to surface that "all should contribute to leaving water in the river and sharing the burden" will only escalate. What is the City's position on this? Is it willing to give up SJC water to benefit the silvery minnow, if others step up to the plate? If not, what will it do? These issues need to be thought through and presented to the public and media soon.

City Growth

While it is not in the scope of this report to address Albuquerque's growth policy, clearly the public in this area presumes that the Water Resources Management Strategy and city growth are intricately linked. Some presume that the City has even adopted this to "flame the growth of Albuquerque." (Growth concerns were also noted at the Albuquerque and Española scoping meetings.) Future materials published by the City should begin to educate the public that this strategy was developed to ensure that we have a sustainable supply for both *current* and *future* city residents and that the City has a responsibility to serve its customers. We also recommend some clarification of population growth statistics (i.e., confirming that most population growth comes from current residents having babies).

**Drinking Water Project
Socorro Public Scoping Meeting 9/28/99
Recorders/Flip Charts
Detailed Summary of Comments**

Organized topically into areas as follows:

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
Main Issue: Potential Impact of Decreased Flows Downstream from Albuquerque to Socorro, also Potential Drought as Related Issue:	The Project Description section of the Draft EIS will detail the City's proposed project and the construction and operation scenarios assumed to be most likely for its implementation. The operation of the proposed project will be evaluated in light of the historic flow patterns of waters in the Rio Chama and Rio Grande. "Wet-", "normal-", and "dry-" year flow scenarios may be evaluated. The baseline flow scenarios to be addressed in the Draft EIS will be agreed upon with the Bureau of Reclamation (the federal lead agency for the proposed project). The potential environmental effects of the proposed action on flows in the river will be evaluated as part of the resource analyses in the Draft EIS.
"Is the (SJC) water flowing down the river now?"	Addressed in the Project Description section of the Draft EIS
"Will there be a dry spot in the river?"	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
"How will San Juan-Chama diversions affect river flows south of Albuquerque?"	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
"Will flows decrease at all?"	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
"What are the conveyance losses - evaporation, etc.? We have farmers here to depend on the river source - I find it hard to believe your low conveyance loss figure."	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
"Are you really accounting for all of the (evaporative) losses?"	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
"What is the net negative impact to farmers in this town, and during drought years?"	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
"What are the projections for the decrease in in-stream flows?"	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS

“The average water flow will decrease once this project is fully implemented, right?”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“What motivation would the city have to help out with that (decreased flow) issue?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Is the plan equipped to address/deal with the extended drought period that may potentially occur during the implementation period?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“If we get into a long period of drought, it’ll throw all that off (the projections)?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“What’s the net result to this area during drought?”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Will there be any decreases of the natural flows?”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“...concerned about decreasing flows...”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“...doubtful that there won’t be any downstream flow reductions...”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“...very concerned about downstream surface flow decreases...”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Could there be a net <i>gain</i> in the river flow at Socorro?”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“...established use pattern impacting river flow?”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“...the impact is greater to this area at different times of year ...what will motivate the city to regulate with respect to this?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Should one consider the acre feet of SJC water plus the additional amount of stream water that will be withdrawn as a result of transferring the point of diversion (with SEO approval) from ground to surface, as a new diversion from the river, the adverse effect on everyone and everything downstream portends a disastrous scenario.”	Addressed in the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS

Questions/Concerns about San Juan Chama Project Water

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Have Albuquerque’s current rights already been deemed consumptive?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Is the stored water the same acreage/supply?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS

“Does the release/gain accurately reflect the usage?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Will there be requirements in place to where when water flows get down to certain levels - no more water is pumped?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Was the SJC water offered to other communities/rest of the state also?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Will Texas get SJC water?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“What are the constraints in using this water?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Are there written short term contracts for the water?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“...\$40 million is a pretty good price for that water.”	No action required.

Diversion Methods

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“The in-river diversion method is likely more constructable if install jet-grouted isolation walls around dewatering and construction areas.”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Could you construct a new surface diversion located further south on the drain using the Albuquerque Main and Alameda lateral for gravity flow?”	In order to get the volume the proposed project requires, water would need to be diverted from the river at Angostura. This suggestion is essentially the same as the potential surface diversion at Angostura. No action required.
“What is the water quality of the surface method?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“What size pipes will you use?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS

<p>“Because of the variation of the river flow from year to year and during each season, much has to be explained on how this project plans to or even can divert a constant amount of water continuously without at times shutting off everything downstream, or if downstream needs are considered how will the plant be designed to run at various times at ¼, ½, ¾, full and over capacity and sometimes be shut down. You must explain how you plan to draw a fixed amount of water from the river which has such a high variation in flow.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Allowing the use of current MRGCD diversions to be used for the plan shrieks of conflict during river low flow periods. Eminent domain or other emergency demands may cause the MRGCD to cease operations. One questions whether these existing diversions have the capacity to handle both the Albuquerque and the irrigation needs. Albuquerque has at the present expressed that their “new source” will be from irrigated lands.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>

Impact to Water Quality

<p><i>Potential Issue</i></p>	<p><i>Action Required</i></p>
<p>“There will be a decrease in the quality of the water - right?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What is the water quality of the surface method?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Will blending be used?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What kind of treatment process will you use with this vs. what you’ve done before?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“It’ll be a challenge to mix groundwater and river water.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Is there a detailed plan for the water treatment plant?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“...concerned about increasing poor quality of water...”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What is the treatment process/method?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>

<p>“When this project is operating, half of the diverted water...would be returned to the river through sewage disposal facilities. The impact of this polluted water entering the river, having a reduced dilution flow, should make the quality of the water downstream of major concern, and warrants an intensive study to determine whether this action would be acceptable and meet all clean water standards.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
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Environmental Concerns

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
<p>“Is the City allowing SJC river water to come down to satisfy certain environmental groups?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What other habitat concerns are coming out of this, besides silvery minnow?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“My only concern is any impact the project may have on our environmental commitment to the minnow - increased protection is a concern.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Will there be an impact on the Indian Hill archaeological site?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What about uses not beneficial to Albuquerque, i.e., silvery minnow?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>

Aquifer Concerns, including ASR (Aquifer Storage and Recovery)

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
<p>“Some of us don’t agree with some of the water studies - now they say there is <i>no recharge</i> to the aquifer.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“...don’t believe that river recharges the aquifer at all...”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What’s the current pumping from the aquifer?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Once you pump it back out, do you need to treat it?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>

“Storage in the aquifer is a good idea.”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“I’d like more information on ASR.”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“How will the surface water quality (dissolved oxygen and precipitation) impact aquifer storage and recovery?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Any plans to use waste water for recharging the aquifer?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS

General

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Will the discharge permit for this project be different than the one they have now (for SJC water)?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“What new sources of water do you anticipate?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“If Albuquerque owns the water and has the right to consumptively use it, why have this process - why not just do it?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“What’s the definition of sustainability?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Mining the (aquifer) water and using excess surface water is not sustainability.”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“When exactly will you divert the water – what is schedule for implementation of use? Five years seems really aggressive.”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS
“Are there any plans in the future to store some of the sewage plant discharge?”	Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS

<p>“If Albuquerque reduces augmentation of stream flow with groundwater, what will be the impact downstream of the waste water treatment plant - i.e., big picture of basin hydrologic impacts?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Site P owners are not willing sellers - they have new 25 yr. leases for hot mix and lafarge plant.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“If Albuquerque controls entirely...Socorro loses water.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“Will FAA prevent treatment site in the S. Valley?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What is the impact on Socorro?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“The removal of water that is maintaining an ecological or environmental balance or that will result in the destruction in a way of life, or the riparian and bosque areas of the river valley, or that would cause the stagnation of any human effort for improvement of economic status or quality of life and that would destroy the esthetic qualities of the Rio Grande valley, must not be allowed on the basis of it being an unconscionable social and environmental impairment, and one that is certainly not in the best interest of the State of New Mexico. New Mexico has not yet done the work required to justify such an elaborate, disruptive, speculative, irreversible project such as the Albuquerque Drinking Water Supply Project. All regional water plans should be completed and compiled into a state water plan before this effort is allowed to continue. The rights of the Pueblos and tribes, the rights of the acequias and all other personal and political entities predating those of Albuquerque, and the in-stream requirements of the Rio Grande Compact and other environmental concerns, the amount of the available water to sustain all of the communities along the Rio Grande must be considered before it can be determined that there is enough water to accomplish the project. A water right of any amount or date is useless if there is no water. The well being and sustainability of the State of New Mexico and its citizenry should be taken under consideration as being more important than the political and economic endeavors of metropolitan Albuquerque and out of state special interest pressures.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“No scientific...evidence has been presented to the public as to the location, depth, nature, or capacity of the aquifers under or around the Albuquerque metropolitan area. The quantity of water in these is unknown...in any event, the probability that the rate of recharge, if any, is a constant is extremely low.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>“What kind of concerns are you getting through these meetings?”</p>	<p>Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS</p>

“I want to make sure water rights laws and issues will not be overridden by federal investigation.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Tonight’s information is conflicting with other information from Interstate Stream Commission, Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of State Engineer.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Make sure small towns, local agencies, entities are involved in the EIS process.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Involve Soil and Water Conservation Districts...La Joya acequias...and all acequias really.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“We simply do not know what we are doing and are using computer models based on flawed data, creative legal arguments, paper transfers, and other self-serving maneuvers instead of working scientifically with the actual use and movement of water...step one in any endeavor to plan the sustainability of this area is the determination in so far as is technically possible the quantity of underground water.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS

City Growth

<i>Potential Issue</i>	<i>Action Required</i>
“Is there a permit that limits the number of (new) people that the city attracts each year?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Is there a question about capping water and limiting growth of Albuquerque, like Los Angeles?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Is this just another way of increasing growth in Albuquerque, and decrease growth here, because of decreased flow?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Our big concern is the body of water that you’re going to discharge, the decrease in the water supply down here and the increase is just going to flame the growth of Albuquerque and take it away from the outside areas.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“The foundation for growth is acquiring increased water and saving the aquifer.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Our concern is the water will be used to increase the population of Albuquerque.”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Do your projections take growth into account?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Are you using the aquifer to attract potential businesses?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS
“Is growth accounted for – is it being used to encourage growth?”	Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS

<p>“This suicidal water management plan encourages unsustainable growth.”</p>	<p>Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS</p>
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Special Note

<p>A letter was received from John Carengelo of La Joya NM (attached). The Hirst Company recommends that the City of Albuquerque prepare a reply as this kind of letter may generate a media response. In the letter Mr. Carengelo raises several points consistent with many of the responses during the meeting:</p> <p>1. Significant concern with downstream effects of the Drinking Water Supply Project, including reduction in river flow and quality of water discharged from Albuquerque;</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>2. Confusion between San Juan Chama water and native flows, and the rights associated with both;</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>3. Challenge to validity of studies which show <i>any</i> recharge to aquifer from river, and the need for more scientific studies of the water supply;</p>	<p>Addressed in the Project Description section and the environmental evaluation of the Draft EIS</p>
<p>4. Need to develop a comprehensive state plan based on regional water plans before the Drinking Water Supply Project is implemented;</p>	<p>Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS</p>
<p>5. The Drinking Water Supply Project and the AWRMS in general encourages unsustainable growth for the City of Albuquerque.</p>	<p>Addressed in the City’s public information program for the AWRMS</p>