



**Local Officials Briefing Questions and Comments**

**Date:** December 3, 2020

**Time:** 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

**Project Name:** I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

**Purpose:** Local Officials Briefing

**Location:** Via WebEx

List of invitees: Warren County, NJ Freeholder Director Richard Gardner; Hardwick Township Mayor Kevin Duffy; Knowlton Township Mayor Adele Starrs; Belvidere Township Mayor Joseph Kennedy; Blirstown Township Mayor Stephen Lance; Hope Township Mayor Timothy McDonough; Independence Township Mayor Robert Giordano; Liberty Township Mayor John Inscho; Monroe County, PA Commission Chairman Sharon Laverdure; Northampton County, PA President-At-Large Ronald Heckman; Portland Borough Mayor Lance Prator; Delaware Water Gap Mayor Larry Freshcorn; Lower Mount Bethel Township Supervisor Sandra Newman; Upper Mount Bethel Township Supervisor John Bermingham; Forks Township Supervisor Chairman John O’Neil; Plainfield Township Supervisor Chairman Randy Heard; and Smithfield Township Supervisor Chairman Brian Barrett.

**Elected Officials in Attendance**

Name	Organization
Sandra Newman	Supervisor, Lower Mount Bethel Township, Pennsylvania
Lance Prator	Mayor, Portland Borough, Pennsylvania
Adele Starrs	Mayor, Knowlton Township, New Jersey
Kevin Duffy	Mayor, Hardwick Township, New Jersey
Timothy C. McDonough	Mayor, Hope Township, New Jersey
Sharon Laverdure	Commission Chairman, Monroe County, Pennsylvania

**Local Officials Briefing: Meeting Comments and Responses (received before, during, and after the meeting)**

**Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 1 (Webex Chat): Can you please summarize the latest from the tribal nations?

RESPONSE 1: A coordination meeting with Tribal Nations is scheduled to occur on December 17, 2020.

**Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 2: Segmentation occurs when an agency artificially divides a project into smaller components in order to avoid application of NEPA to some of its segments. It is not permitted. There are five construction projects slated within five miles of the Rockfall project, these include major projects reconstructing the DRJTBC toll plaza and PA’s I-80 reconstruction project. The NJDOT indicates it is “coordinating” with other agencies about these projects, but there is no plan to look at all of these projects under one NEPA analysis. The Township of Knowlton hereby officially requests that the NJDOT consider all the projects within five miles of the Rockfall Mitigation Project under one NEPA analysis in order to study cumulative impacts and reduce risk of liability to the FWHA. Can the NJDOT please provide a response to that request?



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

RESPONSE 2: Coordination of this project with future projects in New Jersey and Pennsylvania is on-going to avoid conflicts between projects. NJDOT is coordinating with PennDOT to assure regional coordination on traffic and construction activities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. We will be routinely reviewing the construction schedule for the proposed I-80 Reconstruction Project in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, as well as other planned projects in the region, to anticipate and minimize any potential traffic disruptions and delays. Furthermore, a cumulative impacts discussion will be included in the Environmental Assessment and the other projects near the Project Area, including the five projects mentioned above as well as others, will be discussed accordingly. Finally, as it relates to segmentation, segmentation occurs when an agency divides a project into smaller components to avoid application of NEPA to some of its segments. In order to avoid impermissible segmentation, a project must:

- have independent utility or independent significance, i.e., be usable and be a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made;
- connect logical termini and be of sufficient length to address environmental matters on a broad scope; and
- not restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation alternatives.

Regarding the first bullet about independent utility, the I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project is a unique Project with its own purpose and need. The proposed Project would be constructed independently of any other projects in the area, i.e., it has its own purpose and need and it does not require any of the other projects to be built in order for the proposed project to be constructed. The purpose of this Project is to increase safety and improve the mobility of the traveling public by reducing the frequency and severity of rockfall events. Other projects near the project area also have their own unique purposes and needs.

Regarding the second point about logical termini, this involves project limits. The project limits for the proposed Project were developed based on the Project purpose and need and they were also developed based on the slopes in the Project Area where rockfall hazards were identified. Other projects in the area would also have their own separate beginning and end points based on their identified purpose and need.

And finally, regarding the third bullet, construction of the proposed Project would not restrict the development of alternatives to address the needs of any of the other future or planned projects identified.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 3: In the second Public Advisory Group (PAG) meeting on October 7, 2020 (at 1:05:40 in the meeting), the NJDOT representative said the upcoming Environmental Assessment is examining only the preferred design alternative and other alternatives will not be considered. If true, that may be a violation of NEPA. NEPA stipulates that only when there is consensus about the environmental aspects of the proposed action based on input from interested parties, can the proposed action be considered and proceed without consideration of additional alternatives. Otherwise, the agency needs to develop reasonable alternatives to meet project needs (NEPA § 102(2)(E)). Is it the NJDOT's position that there is consensus about the environmental aspects of the proposed action? How does NJDOT explain its decision not to include reasonable alternatives in the Environmental Assessment?

RESPONSE 3: As part of the Preliminary Engineering phase of the Project, a series of alternatives was developed in order to address the safety concerns posed by rockfall hazards along I-80 within the Project Area. These alternatives ranged from major and minor realignments of the I-80 corridor to more localized mitigation strategies without the need to realign I-80. Through this process, NJDOT identified 14 conceptual alternatives for the proposed Project. The 14 conceptual alternatives were subjected to a screening process with the objective of identifying feasible alternatives that satisfy the project need with minimal impact to the natural and built environment. Eight alternatives, including the No Build Alternative, were advanced for further study. These alternatives involved localized mitigation strategies either within the NJDOT right-of-way adjacent to the I-80 highway or beyond the right-of-way extending onto adjacent parkland. The evaluation of project alternatives ultimately led to the recommendation of the Preliminary Preferred Alternative.



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

The NJDOT has conducted a comprehensive outreach program during the development of the Project and the project alternatives were provided to the public as part of the on-going public outreach during this Project, including during the 2019 Open House, the Bi-State Leadership Summit in July 2020, the PAG meeting in September 2020, as well as on the Project website. As part of the public hearing and comment period that will be held in coordination with the Environmental Assessment being available for public review, project stakeholders and the public will have the opportunity to provide comments on the Preliminary Preferred Alternative. The Preliminary Preferred Alternative will continue to be evaluated and refined as the project advances through the Preliminary Engineering phase and into the Final Design phase.

A complete list of project meetings and coordination can be found at:

<https://www.nj.gov/transportation/works/rockfall/outreach.shtm>.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 4: How can NJDOT be doing an impartial EA then, if you're going into it with a preconceived conclusion that you are then building to that conclusion, you've already [laid] it out and are saying that you're not going into the EA as an open slate?

- They're being analyzed but you just said it's not an option and you aren't seriously considering it and that it won't work.

RESPONSE 4: See response 3 above.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 5: In looking back over the history of this project, both the project's purpose and need has changed. Early documentation indicates it was to "reduce the frequency and severity of rockfall events." Later documentation indicates it is to "prevent" rockfall events. That change is significant. It means that mitigation alternatives that would have reduced liability are now unacceptable because they do not go far enough and completely prevent incidents. When did this change occur? How were stakeholders, including the Township of Knowlton and NJTPA members, notified of the change? The scope for this project has also changed. Please explain how and why the scope change occurred, provide the stakeholder input that was solicited, and any stakeholder input that was received.

RESPONSE 5: The overall purpose and need supporting the proposed project has not changed. The purpose statement, and how it has appeared in various materials, has evolved and has been modified from time to time. The purpose of this Project is to increase safety and improve the mobility of the traveling public by reducing the frequency and severity of rockfall events.

### **Kevin Duffy, Mayor of Hardwick, NJ**

COMMENT 6: This is Kevin Duffy. Hi. I've got a question, since the project began NJDOT has consistently said that the project is paid for by federal funding, but recent OPRA requests indicate that the state is required to soft match the federal funds and, in a lot of cases, these soft matches are 20 percent of the project total and, having said that, I understand that NJDOT often uses credits from the New Jersey Turnpike to cover the soft match. What is the soft match that the state is required to pay for this project?

- Kevin Duffy: Okay, well that's kind of a fundamental question, you know, where is the money coming from? And I would think, you know, entering into the project, you would know — you would have your funding solidly lined up. So, I guess, is it NJDOT's position that it is still all federal funds or is there a possibility that the state will be soft matching 20 percent?

RESPONSE 6: The New Jersey Department of Transportation uses the Capital Investment Strategy (CIS) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) for the State of New Jersey to allocate funds.



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

Specifically, the STIP serves two purposes. First, it presents a comprehensive, one-volume guide to major transportation improvements planned in the State of New Jersey. Second, it serves as the reference document, required under federal regulations (23 CFR 450.216), for use by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in approving the expenditure of federal funds for transportation projects in New Jersey. The STIP is a valuable reference for implementing agencies such as the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), New Jersey Transit Corporation (NJ TRANSIT), and all other parties interested in transportation issues in the state.

Toll Credits were created in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and are to be used as credits toward the non-federal matching share of programs authorized by Title 23 (except for the emergency relief program) and for transit programs authorized by Chapter 53 of Title 49.

The amount of credit earned is based on revenues generated by the toll authority (i.e., toll receipts, concession sales, right-of-way leases or interest), including borrowed funds (i.e., bonds, loans) supported by this revenue stream, that are used by the toll authority to build, improve or maintain highways, bridges and/or tunnels that serve interstate commerce. The federal government has allowed state and local governments to use toll credits as part of the local matching funds in regard to transit grants. This allowance results from the recognition that different modes of transportation are interconnected. Capital expenditures to reduce congestion in a particular corridor benefit all modes of transportation in that corridor, be they automobiles, transit buses, or a rail system.

The I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project is being funded using federal resources. These Federal resources require a 20% non-federal share. The State uses toll credits as a soft match to meet the non-federal share requirements as opposed to a hard match, which would mean the outlay of actual State Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) resources. For illustration, let's say a construction contract costs \$100, the Federal resources allocated would be \$100. In this way, the project is completely federally funded. However, these federal resources require a 20% non-federal share, which we meet using soft match. Therefore, \$20 in toll credits are allocated to meet our non-federal share. The use of soft match to meet the required non-federal share is standard for the majority of federally funded projects advanced by NJDOT. At the end of year fiscal year, there is a reconciliation of the soft match used and additional toll credits earned, based on documentation provided and certified by the toll authorities.

More information on the STIP and Toll Credits can be found on the NJDOT website at <https://www.nj.gov/transportation/capital/stip2029/>.

### **Kevin Duffy, Mayor of Hardwick, NJ**

COMMENT 7: Okay, and one more question if I could. It's about the proposed lane configuration. Will it be necessary to create a temporary work zone between the east and westbound lanes to correct the difference in elevation in that part of the roadway?

RESPONSE 7: Yes, there will be a temporary work zone.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 8 (Emailed before the meeting): Will it be necessary to create a temporary work zone between the east and west bound lanes to correct the different in elevation?

RESPONSE 8: Yes, there will be a temporary work zone.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 9 (Emailed before the meeting): Don't standards require this type of work to be done behind the construction barrier?

RESPONSE 9: Yes, work will be done behind a construction barrier.



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 10 (Emailed before the meeting): Explain how is it possible to remove stripe, restripe, fix the different in elevation and do the work necessary to prepare for shifting west bound traffic over without east bound lane closures.

RESPONSE 10: There will be temporary eastbound lane closures during off-peak hours to do that work. This will be limited to only occur during the first year and last year to shift traffic for a short time period. During the remainder of the rockfall mitigation work there will primarily be temporary westbound lane closures during off-peak hours. Standards for center median work zones will follow the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) which has been adopted by states including NJ.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 11 (Emailed before the meeting): West bound, at what mile marker will the taper start?

RESPONSE 11: The taper will follow NJDOT Standard Traffic Control Details. Adjustments may be required for existing geometry and sight conditions. Standards follow the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) which has been adopted by states including NJ.

### **Kevin Duffy, Mayor of Hardwick, NJ**

COMMENT 12: Give me a sense of, you know, what would be the frequency and the duration of the west bound lane closures?

RESPONSE 12: Frequency and duration of westbound temporary lane closures will be further evaluated in Final Design. During Construction, a contractor will clearly define his planned lane closures within the approved lane closure hours as he develops his means and methods. Westbound temporary lane closures would be during non-peak hours, agreed upon by the state, for deliveries and where it is necessary to do so. It will not be every day, but in Preliminary Engineering phase we do not know the frequency.

### **Kevin Duffy, Mayor of Hardwick, NJ**

COMMENT 13: Alright, and one last question. As part of the planning, has NJDOT done any research or projection on trucks and traffic getting off Route 80 say at Exit 19 and going down Route 517 through Hackettstown to 46? We already know that they're already detouring through Hope. Is NJDOT working with those local municipalities to give them a heads-up about what might be coming their way in terms of, you know, immense amounts of traffic?

RESPONSE 13: NJDOT has been and will continue to be in contact with the municipalities impacted by this Project, so open communication will be continuous as the Project progresses. NJDOT is currently in the Preliminary Engineering phase of the Project, as the Project moves into Final Design and plans are developed in much greater detail, NJDOT can develop signing strategies, advanced notification strategies, and work with the towns that may be impacted. The primary goal is to keep all traffic on interstates or state highways and use diversionary, informational outreach well in advance of any kind of diversion onto local roads that cannot handle the traffic volumes.

### **Kevin Duffy, Mayor of Hardwick, NJ**

COMMENT 14: Thank you, this a follow up to that. Will NJDOT... my question was more around the road stoppages and traffic in New Jersey. Will NJDOT be conferring or partnering in any way with PennDOT, because of, obviously the other side of the river is going to have the same problem with two-lane roads totally insufficient for the volume of traffic that might be coming their way?

RESPONSE 14: NJDOT has already had consultation and meetings with PennDOT, specifically their regional traffic engineer and project manager working on the proposed I-80 Reconstruction Project in Monroe County, Pennsylvania. We have been in contact with them, discussed the issues, and are in concert with them.



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

### **Sandra Newman, Supervisor, Lower Mount Bethel Township, Pennsylvania**

COMMENT 15: Yeah, just a follow up on Mayor Duffy's inquiries. How — what is the range of the regions that you will be considering when you reach out to communities in traffic and detours and increased truck traffic? Who else around Stroudsburg that might be impacted? It's going to go all the way down through the top tier of Northampton County, which is PennDOT District 5, and I'd like to be certain that District 5 is included in your communication.

RESPONSE 15: NJDOT's contacts with PennDOT have included Yassmin Gramian, PE, Secretary of Transportation and Michael W. Rebert, District Executive, Engineering District 5. PennDOT District 5 was notified and invited to attend the June 18, 2019, Open House meeting. Yassmin Gramian and Michael Rebert were also invited to attend the Bi-State Leadership Summit meeting. In an effort to minimize impacts to traffic during construction, NJDOT will continue coordination with PennDOT to provide regional coordination on traffic and construction activities in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Special provisions will be included to identify appropriate contacts for concurrent projects in New Jersey and Pennsylvania to communicate and coordinate activities. NJDOT will routinely review the construction schedule for the proposed I-80 Reconstruction Project in Monroe County, Pennsylvania (located approximately five miles west of the Project Area), as well as other planned projects in the region, to anticipate and minimize potential traffic disruptions and delays.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 16: The PAG presentation references three rockfall incidents in Area D that occurred in 2001 and 2010. The 2011 Concept Development Report states that "there are no documented rockfall events nor any recollections of significant rockfall events within Area 'D' over the past 5 to 10 years" (Appendix N, page 4.) Why did the engineering firm that conducted the study, Wyllie & Norrish, fail to include the three incidents that have now come to light?

RESPONSE 16: Gathering information on rockfall regularity and significance is often observational or anecdotal in character. Maintenance work associated with the clean-up of rockfall debris is not tracked in any formalized fashion at the local maintenance facility. Interviews with regional maintenance staff have confirmed that they regularly pick up fallen rock material on a weekly basis within the I-80 Project Area.

One of the best chronicles of rockfall events directly impacting a highway is obtained from police crash records. During Preliminary Engineering, over 600 New Jersey State Police crash records for this section of I-80 were reviewed to identify any crash resulting from rock or natural material entering the highway from the border area. Since the standard alphanumeric coding information in a crash report does not specifically identify fixed objects in their form, the written description in each record was reviewed for specific details to identify those crashed associated with rockfall.

Two of the three incidents in Area D were reported in crash records. The third did not result in a recorded crash.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 17: I would like to understand the NJDOT's definition of "highly controversial" and "significant impacts," which are terms that triggers certain actions. Does this project meet the NJDOT's definition of "highly controversial"? The project affects two states, and permanently impacts a federally protected river, federal parklands, and a nationally significant viewshed. Does the NJDOT acknowledge that these are "significant impacts"? If not, what are examples that would meet the NJDOT's definition of a "significant impact"? What are examples of "highly controversial"?

RESPONSE 17: The updated NEPA regulations no longer include the term highly controversial. Per the federal register, CEQ proposed to exclude consideration of controversy (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)) because the extent to which effects may be controversial is subjective and is not dispositive of effects' significance. Further, courts have interpreted controversy to mean scientific controversy, which the final rule addresses within the definition of effects, as the strength



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

of the science informs whether an effect is reasonably foreseeable. The controversial nature of a project is not relevant to assessing its significance.<sup>1</sup>

As stated in 40 CFR 1501.3, the following is how the significance of an action is determined:

(b) In considering whether the effects of the proposed action are significant, agencies shall analyze the potentially affected environment and degree of the effects of the action. Agencies should consider connected actions consistent with §1501.9(e)(1).

(1) In considering the potentially affected environment, agencies should consider, as appropriate to the specific action, the affected area (national, regional, or local) and its resources, such as listed species and designated critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend only upon the effects in the local area.

(2) In considering the degree of the effects, agencies should consider the following, as appropriate to the specific action:

- (i) Both short- and long-term effects.
- (ii) Both beneficial and adverse effects.
- (iii) Effects on public health and safety.
- (iv) Effects that would violate Federal, State, Tribal, or local law protecting the environment.

CEQ proposed to address the consideration of significance in paragraph (b) since it is central to determining the appropriate level of review. CEQ proposed to move the language from 40 CFR 1508.27, "Significantly," since it did not contain a definition, but rather set forth factors for considering whether an effect is significant, to paragraph (b). CEQ also proposed to eliminate most of the factors in favor of a simpler, more flexible approach for agencies to assess significance. Specifically, CEQ proposed to change "context" to "potentially affected environment" and "intensity" to "degree" to provide greater clarity as to what agencies should consider in assessing potential significant effects.<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of an Environmental Assessment is to determine whether or not a federal action has the potential to cause significant environmental effects. The analyses that are being conducted as part of the Environmental Assessment will assist FHWA in making the determination as to whether the level of impacts warrant the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Environmental Assessment and supporting technical environmental studies will be made available for public review and a Public Hearing will be held. Once public comments are received and evaluated, a determination of the significance of the impacts will be made. If FHWA, as the federal lead agency, determines that the project would result in significant impacts, an EIS will be prepared. If, after completing the Environmental Assessment, it is evident that there are no significant impacts associated with the project, a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) may be prepared.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 18: What is the projected cost of maintenance of the preferred design alternative? How will that maintenance be achieved? Will routine vegetation clearing be needed? Will the NJDOT remove graffiti on the berm? How often will the NJDOT remove graffiti on the berm? Will ongoing lane closures be required when maintenance is occurring?

RESPONSE 18: NJDOT dedicates much time and effort to regularly maintaining its roadways and facilities and traffic operations are sometimes affected to ensure the safety of the workers and motorists. The proposed improvements are being designed in a manner to require low maintenance. Vegetation will be left to create a naturalized appearance in keeping with the surrounding area. Several design features are being investigated to allow for easy worker access to the rockfall mitigation features if required.

### **Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 19: The NJDOT indicates it is pursuing the rockfall mitigation project because a threat to motorists has been identified and the Department has a responsibility to address that liability. A much larger threat to motorists exists in the deficiencies of this road, which have nothing to do with rockfall. This section of road has twice the state average

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/07/16/2020-15179/update-to-the-regulations-implementing-the-procedural-provisions-of-the-national-environmental>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/07/16/2020-15179/update-to-the-regulations-implementing-the-procedural-provisions-of-the-national-environmental>



## I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project

for vehicular accidents. In 2012, Knowlton Township, Senator Steven Oroho and local fire and rescue teams requested that the danger posed by this section of highway due to road design be addressed. A half dozen other towns requested the same by resolution this year. Under NEPA, a project cannot "restrict consideration of alternatives for other reasonably foreseeable transportation improvements." Is it the NJDOT's position, then, that they will **not** be addressing the safety issues of the "s curves" beyond signage? If so, doesn't the NJDOT face greater liability by moving forward with rockfall mitigation when it may restrict alternatives that could be considered to fix the other problems? Doesn't the NJDOT face greater liability by neglecting to address the higher accident rates for this portion of highway?

RESPONSE 19: The purpose of the I-80 Rockfall Mitigation Project is to increase safety and improve the mobility of the traveling public by reducing the frequency and severity of rockfall events. NJDOT is committed to safety of all its customers and is aware of local concerns along the S-curves. We have investigated concerns and implemented roadway and driver enhancements along the S-curves using available innovative technologies to improve driver attention and safety. The current geometry of the roadway is adequate for the posted speed and, in fact, the segment of I-80 between MP 1.04 and MP 1.45 has not exceeded the statewide crash rate for similar facilities by 10% since 2014. Earlier this year, to improve and enhance safety, NJDOT installed new speed limit signs and warning signs with flashing lights along the S-curve segment. In addition, a pavement improvement project along the S-curve segment was recently completed.

**Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 20: Just, can you tell us what's going to happen with this meeting? Will it be posted along with the, you know, Public Advisory Group postings?

RESPONSE 20: A summary of questions and responses will be provided to meeting attendees and will be posted to the project website.

**Adele Starrs, Mayor of Knowlton, NJ**

COMMENT 21: At one of the PAG meetings and again at the meeting today, NJDOT representatives stated clearly that the "no build" alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project. Does NJDOT acknowledge that this was said at the meeting today? Hasn't the NJDOT just made a pre-decisional determination that invalidates the EA process?

RESPONSE 21: As part of the Preliminary Engineering phase of the Project, a series of alternatives were developed in order to address the safety concerns posed by rockfall hazards along I-80 within the Project Area. These alternatives ranged from major and minor realignments of the I-80 corridor to more localized mitigation strategies. Through this process, NJDOT identified 14 alternatives for the proposed project. The evaluation of project alternatives ultimately led to the recommendation of the Preliminary Preferred Alternative. The Environmental Assessment will include an Alternatives Analysis that will present the range of alternatives that were considered. The impact assessment within the Environmental Assessment will assess potential impacts that may result from the No Build Alternative and the Preliminary Preferred Alternative. The No Build Alternative serves as a benchmark against which potential impacts of the project alternatives can be compared. The No Build Alternative does not satisfy the purpose and need of the proposed Project as the rockfall hazards would not be addressed. Neglecting rockfall hazards increases the risk of physical damage, vehicle accidents, and major injury to the traveling public.