§ 651.36 Public involvement.

(a) The involvement of other agencies, organizations, and individuals in the development of EAs and EISs enhances collaborative issue identification and problem solving. Such involvement demonstrates that the Army is committed to open decision-making and builds the necessary community trust that sustains the Army in the long term. Public involvement is mandatory for EISs (see §651.47 and Appendix D of this part for information on public involvement requirements).

(b) Environmental agencies and the public will be involved to the extent practicable in the preparation of an EA. If the proponent elects to involve the public in the development of an EA, §651.47 and Appendix D of this part may be used as guidance. When considering the extent practicable of public interaction (40 CFR 1501.4(b)), factors to be weighed include:

(1) Magnitude of the proposed project/action.

(2) Extent of anticipated public interest, based on experience with similar proposals.

(3) Urgency of the proposal.

(4) National security classification.

(5) The presence of minority or economically-disadvantaged populations.

(c) Public involvement must begin early in the proposal development stage, and during preparation of an EA. The direct involvement of agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise is an integral part of impact analysis.
§ 651.37 Public availability.

Documents incorporated into the EA or FNSI by reference will be available for public review. Where possible, use of public libraries and a list of POCs for supportive documents is encouraged. A depository should be chosen which is open beyond normal business hours. To the extent possible, the WWW should also be used to increase public availability of documents.

§ 651.38 Existing environmental assessments.

EAs are dynamic documents. To ensure that the described setting, actions, and effects remain substantially accurate, the proponent or installation Environmental Officer is encouraged to periodically review existing documentation that is still relevant or supporting current action. If an action is not yet completed, substantial changes in the proposed action may require supplementation, as specified in §651.5 (g).

§ 651.39 Significance.

(a) If the proposed action may or will result in significant impacts to the environment, an EIS is prepared to provide more comprehensive analyses and conclusions about the impacts. Significant impacts of socioeconomic consequence alone do not merit an EIS.

(b) Significance of impacts is determined by examining both the context and intensity of the proposed action (40 CFR 1508.27). The analysis should establish, by resource category, the threshold at which significance is reached. For example, an action that would violate existing pollution standards; cause water, air, noise, soil, or underground pollution; impair visibility for substantial periods; or cause irreparable harm to animal or plant life could be determined significant. Significant beneficial effects also occur and must be addressed, if applicable.

(c) The proponent should use appropriate methods to identify and ascertain the “significance” of impacts. The use of simple analytical tools, which are subject to independent peer review, fully documented, and available to the public, is encouraged.\textsuperscript{4} In particular, where impacts are unknown or are suspected to be of public interest, public involvement should be initiated early in the EA (scoping) process.

Subpart F—Environmental Impact Statement

§ 651.40 Introduction.

(a) An EIS is a public document designed to ensure that NEPA policies and goals are incorporated early into the programs and actions of federal agencies. An EIS is intended to provide a full, open, and balanced discussion of significant environmental impacts that

\textsuperscript{4}EIFS is one such Army system for evaluating regional economic impacts under NEPA. This system is mandated, as Army policy, for use in NEPA analyses. Other similar tools may be mandated for use in the Army, and will be documented in guidance published pursuant to this part.