



PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

WestConnect Coalition PEL

Updated January 2018

Q: What is the purpose of the WestConnect Coalition PEL Study?

A: The WestConnect Coalition is conducting this study to evaluate and develop short-term and long-term transportation alternatives and to identify proposed improvements along C-470, between Kipling and I-70, and along the US 6/CO 93 corridor between Golden and Boulder. The PEL study will evaluate options to reduce congestion, improve operational performance safety, and address future transportation needs.

Q: What roadways are being studied?

A: The study area for the WestConnect PEL is defined as C-470 from Kipling to I-70/US 6 in south Jefferson County, US 6 from C-470 to CO 58/CO 93 in Golden, and CO 93 from Golden to Marshall Road (CO 170) in Boulder County. Major arterial intersections and interchanges along the corridor are also included.

Q: What is a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study?

A: This transportation study is being conducted using the PEL approach. PEL is a study approach that is used to identify transportation issues and environmental concerns, which can be applied to make planning decisions and for planning analysis. PEL studies link planning to environmental issues and result in useful information that may ultimately be used to prepare a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) study and final design, and to help streamline the process.

Q: How does the WestConnect Coalition PEL Study relate to current and previous studies in the project area?

A: Individual local jurisdictions and regional agencies along the corridor have previously completed planning and design efforts for some improvements. The PEL study respects the existing plans of the Coalition agencies within their respective jurisdictional boundaries. However, the Coalition was formed because these agencies desire to formulate a cohesive transportation plan along the regional corridor. New data was collected for this study and agencies and members of the public contributed to development of a corridor vision, along with improvement recommendations to achieve that vision for the entire corridor. For example, the City of Golden's Plan for US 6 and CO 93 through Golden was incorporated into the PEL study analysis. The previous Northwest Corridor Study process was a precursor to the ongoing Jefferson Parkway planning effort, which is separate from the PEL study.

Q: How were alternatives evaluated?

A: Alternatives were evaluated for consistency with the corridor vision using a three-tiered process. The detailed alternatives screening process determined impacts (both adverse and beneficial) of various corridor improvements. Action alternatives were compared to a No Action alternative. Traffic analysis considered local agency plans and refined land use projections into the year 2040. Public and agency comments have been considered during every step in the study process.



Q: What is the role of the Jefferson Parkway in the PEL process?

A: Members of the WestConnect Coalition have different positions regarding the Jefferson Parkway. Given such differences, but a collective desire to ensure effective use of funding, WestConnect Coalition members agreed to not include the Jefferson Parkway in the PEL study. Members agreed that the PEL study will not analyze or recommend alternatives to the Jefferson Parkway. The Jefferson Parkway project will be considered in a separate process from the PEL study.

In order to ensure a comprehensive study, however, the PEL study considered the potential traffic implications and impacts to CO 93 with and without the Jefferson Parkway. The PEL Study will not study or make recommendations regarding Jefferson Parkway design or funding.

CDOT's 1601 Interchange Approval Policy Directive is a separate process that will address the Jefferson Parkway. The Jefferson Parkway Public Highway Authority has initiated the 1601 application process for the Jefferson Parkway. CDOT is obligated to respond to this application and will require a detailed traffic analysis, as the Jefferson Parkway is planned to connect with the state system at CO 93, and at CO 72 and CO 128.

Q: What will the product of this study be?

A: This study will develop recommendations to reduce congestion, improve operational performance and safety and address future transportation needs along the study corridor. The study will provide a plan for future short- and long-term improvements, which will be used by Coalition agencies and CDOT to obtain funding to implement projects. At the conclusion of the study, recommendations will be documented in a PEL Report, which will be made available on the project web page once finalized.

Q: What is the timeframe for this study and construction of these improvements?

A: The PEL study is expected to last approximately two years and be completed in early 2018. This study will make both short- and long-term improvement recommendations. Subsequent NEPA study(ies) will be required for ultimate improvements. The timeline for improvements is dependent on funding availability. Construction funding has yet to be identified. It is likely that the improvements would be constructed in phases.

Q: How is noise being evaluated and what sound mitigation will be included in this project?

A: As the project moves into the NEPA process and final design (a step anticipated following the PEL study), CDOT will begin a far more involved noise study and would install noise mitigation in locations where it is found to be required.

Q: When are comments due? What opportunities will there be to provide input?

A: Recommendations for the PEL study will be confirmed in early 2018. Comments can be submitted at any time on the project web page (westconnectpel.codot.gov), or by mail to Leah Langerman, David Evans and Associates, 1600 Broadway, Suite 800, Denver, CO 80202. Comments submitted following confirmation of the study recommendations will be documented and shared with CDOT to be considered as individual projects move forward into environmental clearance, design, and implementation. Use the information above to join the study mailing list to receive notices related to this study and future study and design efforts along the corridor.

