

WestConnect Coalition
Technical Working Group Meeting
Wednesday, September 9, 2015 - 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Jefferson County Administration Building
Draft Notes

Purpose: Review input from Steering Committee and discuss the approach for developing the SOW for the PEL

Topic
Discussion: Review Direction and Input from Steering Committee
Presentation and Discussion: PEL Scope of Work <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion of CDOT’s proposed approach to the SOW for PEL
Discussion: Communication with the public, approach with Steering Committee and future agenda topics

Discussion Notes

Review Direction from Steering Committee

The TWG discussed the direction provided at the August Steering Committee meeting and noted that the meeting was positive step in clarifying the PEL process and goals. It was noted that the TWG recommendations were accepted by the Steering Committee without significant modifications.

Clarifying ‘Respect’ for Jurisdiction Plans

Through discussion, the TWG clarified what it meant to ‘respect’ existing jurisdictional plans in the PEL. The questions raised include, does respecting plans mean that the PEL analysis must conform to what is in the existing plans, for example the Golden Plan? What if there are ideas/projects that are not in a jurisdictions plan, is the PEL precluded from looking at it?

It was noted, that existing plans will be very difficult to change based on the public and technical processes undertaken to develop such plans. However, if traffic problems are identified in the analyses that are not covered in the plans and there are solutions that would have a positive effect, such treatments will not be precluded. Rather than change plans, new alternatives, if identified, would move forward in parallel within the PEL. The PEL process is flexible and may identify needed treatments that do not rise to the top of the Coalition’s priority list or are fiscally infeasible at this time. The PEL would identify the issue and responsible agency or jurisdiction and provide the PEL data.

While the PEL will not seek out new alternatives for the areas with existing plans, it will incorporate them into the analysis. For example, the PEL would not actively seek out changes to the Golden Plans, but if it is clear, through the analysis that something was not working, the PEL would identify it. The PEL doesn’t have to answer every problem identified but can identify issues and put them in a “parking lot.”

The PEL, it was noted, should not be cautious about identifying items that require reconsideration, even if they are within a segment with existing plans. The PEL will not use an “all or nothing” approach but be a tool for acknowledging issues and problems.

It was cautioned that when a traffic systems perspective is taken, sometimes different treatments emerge, i.e. where the congestion takes place may not be where the problem originates.

Scope of Work

After incorporating the input and direction from the TWG and Steering Committee, CDOT presented a draft approach for the PEL to serve as the framework for the consultant scope of work. The approach would focus the traffic analysis of the PEL on areas where there are no jurisdictional plans and/or connections. By focusing the traffic analysis on gap areas and building off of existing information in the other areas, it will use the PEL’s limited resources efficiently. As such, one of the first task in the PEL would be look at the ‘gaps’ and obvious points of connections and focus the traffic analysis at those points. The gap areas initially identified include SH93 south of SH 72, SH 93 north of SH 72, C470 (Segment 2) and the connections with US 6 and I-70. The group was encouraged, as much as possible, to focus the traffic analysis in the PEL on the on gap areas.

Comment [JB1]: Jon please confirm

How will areas with existing plans be treated?

Another major task in the PEL will be integrating the existing plans or “unfunded construction templates” into the analysis. The PEL effort will mesh future plans and data, and consider the 2040 planning horizon, while not precluding shorter-term solutions. The task of bringing together the existing plans will be included in the scope of work for a consultant. The goal is to identify reasonable solutions that address the identified needs, are cost effective, and provide a positive impact on the system.

The TWG discussed further how the specific transportation plans, developed by jurisdictions, would be considered in the PEL. It was recognized that while the gap areas would be the focus of the traffic analysis, the existing plans would be included in the analysis for improvements and the prioritized list of projects. TWG members noted that existing plans do not have a standard template and that the PEL

could provide advice about implementation or phasing. Concern was expressed that, depending on how the existing transportation plans were considered, the PEL may not identify smaller opportunities that would have immediate impact and relief. For example, is there a phase of the Golden plan that improves mobility in the corridor? What is the logical phased implementation? If you do part of it but not all of it, what are the benefits? Where?

TWG members expressed an interest in identifying projects that not only meet a long-term or ultimate goal but those that provide a more timely way to address existing problems. The ability to implement a plan in increments and work at the connections and gaps was identified as important. How a project is phased and the criteria used to determine priorities were discussed (cost effectiveness, cost/benefit to the transportation system as a whole, time to implement, geographic equity). It was noted that conducting phasing analysis on each of the plans may be time consuming and challenging to do in the context of the PEL.

It was highlighted that there is not a complete understanding of the 'existing plans' across the TWG. It was suggested that at the next TWG meeting, each jurisdiction with a plan provide a brief overview of their plan and priorities.

In an effort to understand and identify the specific problems in the WestConnect study area, the example of Phase 1 of the C470 was provided. During Phase 1 the segments were divided into 22 segments, - mainline; interchange; mainline; interchange. This approach, breaking down the segments in smaller units, may be the way to move forward with the C470 PEL. This approach would allow for site specific issues and problems to be identified.

1601 Process with Jefferson Parkway

The 1601 process for the Jefferson Parkway is distinct from the PEL. CDOT discussed its obligations regarding the 1601 process and noted that they require traffic analysis when connecting with the system. The Jefferson Parkway initiated the 1601 process with CDOT and has purchased right-of-way; similar to a mall development, CDOT requires a traffic analysis through the 1601 process that identifies the issues when connecting to the state system. Because the 1601 process and traffic analysis will likely be initiated before the PEL study, CDOT will validate the methodology and ensure that the data is valid to be able to incorporate into the PEL analysis. These two processes, the 1601 for Jefferson Parkway and the PEL, however will overlap in both time and space. Steve Harrelson noted that meshing of data happens frequently and is common practice at CDOT.

What assumptions will be made for the Jeff Parkway traffic? The Jefferson Parkway, as has been agreed up on previously, will be examined in the PEL from both a build and a no-build perspective to understand implications for the existing system and future improvements.

Next Steps

- CDOT will provide a draft scope of work to the TWG for the PEL by October 7th; TWG members will provide their comments/edits to Jonathan by the 13th of October. During the TWG meeting on October 14th, the substantive comments regarding the scope of work will be discussed and ideally agreed upon.
- Steve Harrelson noted that a target date has been identified for release of the SOW- January 1, 2016

Public Outreach and Communication

The issue of how to handle public outreach and communication was discussed during the interim before a PEL contractor is selected. Jefferson County will continue to post information about the WestConnect meeting to their website until the new website is up and running. Jonathan will develop a FAQ document that answers basic questions about the Coalition and the approach to the PEL.

Attendees

Alex Ariniello	Dave Downing	Jordan Rudel
Bill Ray	Jana Spiker	Jonathan Bartsch
John Padon	Jon Chesser	Derek Schuler
Kevin Standbridge	Michael Sweeney	
Steve Durian	Steve Harelson	
Anne Beierle	Dan Hartman	
Bob Manwaring	George Gerstle	