



WestConnect Coalition PEL

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES STUDY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Updated November 1, 2016

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

A: The WestConnect Coalition is conducting an 18-month 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/SH 93 corridor between Golden and Boulder. The PEL study will evaluate options to:

- reduce congestion;
- improve operational performance and safety; and
- address future transportation needs.

Q: What roadways will be studied in the PEL study?

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 SH 58/SH 93 in Golden, and SH 93 from Golden to Marshall Road (SH 170) in Boulder County. Major arterial intersections and interchanges along the corridor will also be included.

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

A: This transportation study will be 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: What are the major elements of the WestConnect Coalition's PEL study?

A: The key objectives of the PEL study are to:

- Conduct public outreach and coordination with Local, State and Federal Resource agencies
- Identify existing and future issues and problem areas in the corridor from operational, mobility, maintenance, and safety perspectives
- Identify natural resource and/or environmental agency concerns
- Consolidate and address jurisdiction priorities and plans
- Develop alternatives to address the short-term and long-term needs and consider potential funding sources
- Prepare a prioritized list of proposed improvements
- Establish cost estimates for the WestConnect Coalition to use when seeking project funding
- Develop next steps, an implementation plan and potential funding options

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 will respect 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 will be collected for this study and agencies and members of the public will have an opportunity to develop 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 SH 93 through Golden will be 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: 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 will still consider the potential traffic implications and impacts to SH 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 SH 93, and at SH 72 and SH 128.

Q: What kinds of improvements will be considered in the PEL study?

A: This study will consider a wide range of options for study area roadways, intersections and interchanges along the WestConnect corridor, and pedestrian, bicycle, transit and operational improvements. Lower-cost improvements such as signal timing and coordination, turn lanes and signage will be considered, as well as larger-scale improvements such as roadway widening, interchanges, and pedestrian/bicycle facilities. All reasonably feasible improvement suggestions within the study area are welcome and will be considered during alternatives development.

Q: How will alternatives be evaluated?

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

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.

Q: What is the schedule for the PEL study and when will recommendations from this study be constructed?

The PEL study is expected to last approximately 18-months and be completed by fall of 2017. This study is expected to make both short- and long-term improvement recommendations. A subsequent NEPA study will be required for ultimate improvements. The timeline for improvements is dependent on funding availability. It is likely that the improvements would be constructed in phases.

Q: How can I get involved in the PEL process?

A: There are many ways to participate in this study and help shape the recommendations:

- Join the study mailing list to receive notices of public meetings and other study updates
- Attend a public open house, participate in a project telephone town hall meeting and/or an online public meeting
- Invite project team members to speak with your group (contact westconnectcoalitionpel@state.co.us)
- Provide comments throughout the study (during meetings, on the project web page, or by contacting a project representative)
- Check the project web page periodically, to view updates at key milestones: westconnectpel.codot.gov