

Joint TAG Meeting Summary

June 21, 2018



Subject:	I-70 PEL Study Joint Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Meeting	Client:	MoDOT
Meeting Date/ Time:	June 21, 2018 2:00 pm	Project:	I-70 PEL Study
Meeting Location:	Maryland Heights Government Center	Project Number	MoDOT: J6I3038 Jacobs: C1X32800

Meeting Participants

TAG Members

Burt Benesek, City of St. Peters
Amanda Brauer, St. Charles County
Gary Elmestad, St. Charles County
Michael Hurlbert, St. Charles County
Derek Koestel, City of Lake St. Louis
Douglas Lee, City of Wentzville
David Leezer, City of St. Charles
L.G. Loos, City of Maryland Heights
Dan Mann, City of St. Charles
Nick Nichols, St. Louis Port Authority
Jeff Paskiewicz, City of O'Fallon
Adam Spector, St. Louis County
Susan Spiegel, City of Wentzville
Jan Titus, St. Louis Lambert International Airport
Mark Vogl, Great Rivers Greenway

I-70 PEL Team Members

MoDOT

Wesley Stephen
Richard Moore
Shaun Tooley
Andy Tuerck
Eddie Watkins

EWG

Marcie Meystrik

Consultant Team

Jim Clarke (Jacobs)
Kelly Ferrara (StratCommRx)
Olivia Lackey (StratCommRx)
Kyle Levenhagen, (AECOM)
Tracey Lober (Jacobs)
J.C. Murray (AECOM)

Summary of Meeting

1. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. We revisited the scope: Need to be at the systems level of analysis. While this work is not NEPA, our project is foundational to NEPA. A questionnaire will be completed and provided to FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) to ensure that the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process was followed. Approval from FHWA is not required, but a Letter of Approval will be issued by FHWA indicating the PEL process was followed and information obtained can be utilized in future NEPA evaluation. That process confirms the high-level assessment of the corridor and a response to a PEL questionnaire. From this PEL approval, NEPA projects can follow. The PEL is the evolution of the MTIA (Major Transportation

Investment Analysis) process. We produced a Purpose and Need, that is also a part of the NEPA process and included in the final document.

- b. We recently received a Finding Of No Significant Impact on the I-270 Corridor. This is not that same type of project, yet there are similarities. That study looked at 15 interchanges and recommended auxiliary lanes and to modernize interchanges. MoDOT took a flexible-NEPA approach – in case the design/build option is available. MoDOT cleared a footprint for the corridor improvements.
 - c. The I-70 PEL has identified high-level concepts and prioritized them. We have not specified individual projects. We wanted to set goals for the corridor. The five segments defined along this 40-mile corridor are not sections of independent utility (SIU), yet individual SIUs can come from this corridor.
 - d. This product will benefit all of our partners in this study and MoDOT will seek to partner with the communities for future projects.
 - e. There is an express/reversible lane section of the corridor that is being reviewed. The consultant will be delivering a white paper solely on those lanes.
2. PEL Refresher
- a. Thank you to those who have been with us back to 2014 and again last year.
 - b. Flexibility is key to this report.
 - c. Vision statement reviewed and was provided as a handout.
3. Goals
- a. Exist at the corridor level and at the segment level.
 - b. Corridor-wide goals include reducing crashes, maintaining infrastructure physical conditions, ensure the system operates at MoDOT's acceptable level of service standards, improve freight movement, improve access to public transportation, minimize impacts to the built environment.
 - c. Segment goal samples were reviewed on the slides.
4. Key Steps
- a. Study can be broken into six steps; and was provided as a handout.
 - b. Step 1 – Understand the needs: collect data from prior reports, conditions reports, stakeholders, agencies, etc.
 - c. Step 2 – Establish a vision and purpose: serve as a catalyst for economic development, while improving systems and minimizing impacts.
 - d. Step 3 – Determine specific goals: goals will state the desired outcomes, directly reflect the needs in the corridor, and guide development and evaluation of transportation strategies.
 - e. Step 4 – Identify and Prioritized Strategies: corridor-wide and specific strategies were identified and prioritized during multiple study team workshops. Examples were highlighted from slide content, e.g., improving bike/pedestrian facilities; improve parallel

road system capacity. Segment specific strategies were evaluated against the goals to determine which ones would best adhere to the overall vision of the corridor.

- f. Step 5 – Explore solutions: research strategies to assess how they are currently being applied and what more could be done. Flesh out what specific improvements are needed within each segment to address the high-priority strategies. Graphic example of how these might look is included in slides.
 - g. Step 6 – Develop recommendations: offer recommendations on transportation strategies and guidance on evaluating how well future projects meet the strategies and goals of the corridor.
5. Outcomes
- a. Develop recommendations for corridor-wide strategies and segment-level improvement options.
 - b. Recommend likely NEPA classifications for future projects for consideration.
6. Final PEL Report
- a. Will resemble the NEPA report framework such as a Purpose and Need.
 - b. Parts that are unique include the detailed PEL Questionnaire, identifying the completion of steps and procedures completed during the study.
 - c. Appendix will include a Letter of Acceptance from FHWA to memorialize that the PEL intent was followed and that this document can be referenced in future NEPA process.
7. Next Steps
- a. June 27 – East-West Gateway Meeting
 - b. July 18 and July 19 – Final TAG and SAG meeting, along with public officials briefing, and public meeting.
8. Questions
- a. What will public see at the July meetings?
 - i. All maps will be completed, as well as the checklist for the process of future projects going forward. PEL should be nearly completed at that point.
 - b. What is the FHWA review schedule?
 - i. Plan is to have everything done by the end of July. FHWA review will be concurrent with MoDOT and TCIG review.
 - c. Can we include on some of the documents what PEL stands for?
 - i. Yes. It is on the title slide, and handouts in the future will explain this.
 - d. Can we include information in the content about the fact that we are working on 40 miles of a transcontinental highway?
 - i. Point well taken. This is a regional and a national corridor. The PEL Report will have a brief overview of the interstate
 - e. This document will generate future projects for segments of independent utility that will be presented to the Metropolitan

- Planning Organization (MPO): East-West Gateway Council of Governments. Can we add to the document that this report can be recognized as a foundational piece by EWG for future work?
- i. The document can reflect that this project is recognized by the MPO.
 - ii. The document will present a set of criteria from which we will evaluate any future proposals.
- f. It was mentioned that this project will recommend NEPA classifications for segments. What does that comment mean?
- i. As best we can, the team will make some judgements on NEPA classification. We are looking at minor changes such as auxiliary lane within an existing right of way. Some more expansive interchange improvements, there may be a range of NEPA document such as an EA or EIS needed. We will need to keep it general. Ultimate decision lies with FGWA.
- g. Can stakeholder groups take information from this report and make some decisions against these recommendations?
- i. Yes. Some CE2 recommendations, when details around defined projects are evaluated, may be elevated to an EA or EIS. Ultimately is an FHWA decision but will consider the recommendations of this report
- h. You talk about the MTIA/MIS. Is a PEL the equivalent is more or less?
- i. The MTIA is the forerunner of the PEL. You get a Purpose and Need from a PEL, that is now already approved by FHWA. It is codified.
 - ii. PELs are a reaction to two things. Regarding MIS – these were required for projects up to a certain dollar amount, PELs are always optional. At the end of an MIS, you had a lot of great information, yet you had to start all over again for NEPA. PELs let you skip that step.
- i. Were transportation options reviewed as this study was being completed, such as the St. Charles transit study, Jacobs' bike-pedestrian studies, and the Booker-Willis studies?
- i. Yes, and the existing conditions report on the website references these studies. Each was considered as a foundational document to our study, and was consulted.
- j. Concerned about level D recommendation mentioned: don't we want to strive for something higher?
- i. That is the same standard MoDOT applies to all plans. It considers peak hour usage.
- k. Bucher-Willis study recommended overpasses and interchange improvements so that local trips are on local roads. Someone put a porkchop near Cave Springs Road. Can the porkchop be removed, so drivers can navigate only the outer road?

- i. The main reason for the porkchop was to resolve how closely the on/off ramps were spaced to the outer roads. Traffic engineers recommended that solution to resolve crashes and concerns about that area.
- l. Concerns about Segments 1 and 2: are we limiting ourselves as far as goals and strategies that are applied to the west? We do share some of the goals as mentioned in other segments, yet they aren't listed for our segment. Will this limit our ability to apply for future project support? Example: Freight needs apply to all segments.
 - i. The goals listed on the slides for each segment were intended to be examples. These goals are in addition to the already expansive corridor-wide goals.
- m. Will responses submitted Monday [by St. Charles County] be responded to?
 - i. Yes.
- n. Can Segment 2's goal about future development be added as a goal to Segment 1, or added to all segments?
 - i. The team can review.
- o. Can the Segment 1 goal of parallel/local roads be modified, as there aren't outer roads there?
 - i. Intent of study is to be flexible and remain at a high level so as to enhance future needs rather than limit them.
- p. Can Segment 2 refer to parallel roads include perpendicular or local roads?
 - i. The team can review.
- q. How can we make sure the options for all segments are included in the open house, and how can we help you get ready?
 - i. We should be ready. PEL Questionnaire will be finalized and we will address questions and have visuals to share as well.
- r. Can you walk me through how this will be used to select future projects? If St. Peters proposes an improvement to the outer road system or other, how will that project get plugged in with the criteria in the study?
 - i. Likely will be to see how project aligns with vision, goals, and strategies from this document. The project team is continuing their thinking on this question. We believe an evaluation tool will be helpful.
- s. Will there be a formula or weighting factor of how a project proposal meets or doesn't meet the goals and strategies?
 - i. Still under review by the team.
- t. Concern that the public won't understand the current numbering system used for the segments, and suggests we use Z to K for Segment 1 instead of "1." Can we also be clear about the fact that we aren't building Z to K as the first priority by naming it "1"?
 - i. Good feedback.
- u. How soon will the white paper be completed on express lanes?

- i. Draft to MoDOT by the July meeting dates. Eddie Watkins would like to receive the white paper. MoDOT has recommended key stakeholders for the project team to speak to regarding the express lane project.

9. Adjourn

Sign-In Sheets (3 pages)

Note: Brad Temme's information was added to one of the sign-in sheets by a colleague, in an effort to ensure he be updated as the project progressed. He did not attend the meeting.

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ENVISION I-70

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