



State Route 37 Corridor (Ultimate Solution for US 101 to I-80 Corridor) Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study Public Meeting Summary, January 25, 2022

Overview

Caltrans Bay Area District 4, in coordination with Caltrans Headquarters, is conducting a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study for the State Route (SR) 37 Corridor between US 101 to I-80 to identify transportation needs, consider alternatives, and develop a comprehensive and collaborative transportation vision for this critical corridor. On January 25, 2022, Caltrans hosted the second public meeting for this study to share information with the public on the study status and answer questions. The following is a summary of the public meeting.

Meeting Format

The meeting was held online using the Zoom webinar format. Caltrans staff and consultants gave a presentation and shared a video and simulation of alignments. The presentation portion of the meeting lasted approximately 45 minutes. During the presentation, participants were encouraged to enter questions or comments using the Zoom Chat feature. Following the presentation, the meeting moderator provided an overview of questions and comments that had been received and the Caltrans team to verbally address them. He then encouraged participants to ask verbal questions, to which the team responded.

Participants

Over 300 people logged in to the meeting between 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. Approximately 250 participants appeared to be from the general public.

Accessibility

The presentation content and questions/answers were translated in real time from English to Spanish and English to Tagalog. At the start of the meeting, Spanish and Tagalog translators informed participants that translation services were available, and that they could listen in Spanish or Tagalog by joining that language channel through the Zoom webinar. The meeting was also recorded and posted to the [PEL webpage](#) to be available to anyone who wishes to watch the presentation portion of the meeting. The meeting presentation was posted to the project webpage in English, Spanish and Tagalog.

Summary

During the meeting, Caltrans staff presented details on what a PEL study is, details on how this PEL study relates to other ongoing work in the corridor, provided a general timeline for the completion of the PEL study, provided the public with the project purpose statement, a summary of corridor needs, and preliminary alignments being considered as part of the project study. The meeting was then followed by an approximately one-hour question and answer session. Below are details on each topic discussed during the public meeting as well as comments and questions received during the question-and-answer session.



Introductions

- Chris Caputo, Acting Environmental Planning and Engineering Division Chief Bay Area District 4, started the public meeting by orienting the public to the functionality of the zoom meeting. An introduction video prepared by Mark Jones of MTC was then played which highlighted the needs and challenges faced by State Route 37 corridor today and into the future. Chris Caputo, then outlined the topics that would be discussed during the public meeting before introducing Tammy Massengale.

What and Why

- Tammy Massengale, Caltrans Headquarters Coordinator Bay Area District 4, introduced the public to what a PEL study is, the key benefits of the PEL study process, and how the PEL study process integrates the planning process with the stages of highway development. A schedule for the SR 37 PEL was provided which detailed steps leading up to the public meeting as well as next steps for the PEL study.

PEL Study Development

- Tammy Massengale introduced the public to what a PEL study is, the key benefits of the PEL study process, and how the PEL study process integrates the planning process with the stages of highway development. The purpose statement, in the bulleted list below, for the PEL study was presented to the public along with a summary of needs identified for the corridor.
 - Preserving a critical regional transportation corridor that is resilient to extreme events while integrating ecological resiliency which facilitates adaptation to sea level rise
 - Providing reliable travel time and increasing average vehicle occupancy
 - Providing safe mobility for bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Maintaining and enhancing public access, including to recreational areas
 - Providing equitable transit and multimodal transportation solutions that improve access for, and provides meaningful benefits to all users of SR 37, with special consideration of underserved communities

PEL Study Nuts and Bolts

- John Cook, ICF Consultant, presented the framework for how evaluation criteria and screening process will be completed for the project. He presented how evaluation criteria will follow a three-level process to identify which are the most viable alignments to carry forward into the formal environmental review process. John identified how the PEL process integrates transportation planning decisions and analysis, including purpose and need, identification of preliminary alignments, and elimination of unreasonable alignments, to better inform formal environmental review process that is required under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
- John summarized the numerous SR 37 Corridor studies that the PEL study team has reviewed to develop the range of alignments and modes presented to the public. These studies have been conducted by a variety of agencies and organizations, including Caltrans, the Transportation Authority for Marin County (TAM), the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (known as SMART), and others. Many of these studies have reckoned with the potential for sea level rise to inundate the SR 37 corridor.
- Eight preliminary alignments were then simulated in a video narrated by Joaquin Pedrin, Caltrans Senior Landscape Architect, District 4.



- John then identified the various transportation modes that are also being considered in the PEL study. These include:
 - Bus
 - Floating Bridge
 - Ferries
 - Rail options, including auto train
 - Tolling
 - Tunnel

Public Input and Feedback

- The Caltrans and consultant team then facilitated a one-hour public comment period utilizing the Zoom chat and verbal comments. The following themes were captured.

Question and Comment Themes

- Alignments
 - Lengths
 - Sensitive resources
 - Travel time
 - Connection points
 - Level of Service
 - Construction impacts
 - Number of lanes
 - Existing congestion on adjacent routes (Highway 12, Highway 29)
 - Cost
 - Public input/"Voting" for an alignment
- Additional travel modes
 - Rail
 - Ferry
 - Bus
 - Tunnel
- Bicycling and pedestrian facilities
 - Including physically separated access from motor traffic
- Public transportation needs (bus, rail)
- Methods to reduce congestion on roadways
 - Consideration of increase congestion on northern alignments
- Housing
 - Connection to housing
 - Access to affordable housing
 - Increase congestion from additional housing
- Tolling



- Concerns over fees
 - Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT)
 - Sea Level Rise
 - Impacts to disadvantaged communities
 - Origin/destination of travelers
 - Impacts to existing business/landowner on existing SR 37
 - BCDC alignment considerations
 - Costs