



PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES

TECHNICAL WORK GROUP MEETING #4

COMMENT DOCUMENTATION



CA0602

Interstate 530 – Highway 67

April 2015



Arkansas State Highway & Transportation Department





CAP Deliverable QC Comment Review Form

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Cmnt No.	Section/ Page No.	Reviewer	Review Comment	Response	Change Verified		Agency Verified **
					New Pg.	Initials / Date	
1	Email 04/01/15	Walter Malone, Planning Manager, City of Little Rock	Need to redo the matrix to show the benefits, etc. without any outside non-funded projects assumed completed (and the speed/LOS profiles). We need this to truly understand what the community is getting with this project.	<p>The following capacity improvements outside the PEL study limits (“outside areas/ improvements”) were determined necessary to accurately evaluate the PEL study area during the PEL Study:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I-630 westbound lane added from Louisiana Street west beyond the model limits; and 2. I-30 eastbound and westbound lane added in each direction southwest of the south terminal to 65th Street beyond the model limits. <p>Because these two outside areas are known points of future year (2041) congestion as determined using Vissim, modeling without their assumed implementation would prevent the identification of mobility problems within the PEL study limits, thereby leading to an inaccurate assessment of how the proposed improvements would actually perform.</p> <p>AHTD has acknowledged both of these outside areas warrant additional study. Plans exist to study and improve, as determined necessary, these two outside study corridors.</p>	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓



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				<p>The I-30 PEL Study is the first step in planning for impending congestion issues along the I-30/I-40, setting the foundation for future planning studies of adjacent corridors located outside of the PEL study limits.</p> <p>As part of the NEPA process, the PEL Recommendation would be evaluated without the outside improvements along I-30 and I-630.</p>			
2	<p>Email 04/01/15</p>	<p>Walter Malone, Planning Manager, City of Little Rock</p>	<p>Also need to share when these outside non-funded improvements to I-630 (west) and I-30 (south) beyond of the study area would be needed. Show when the impacts start to appear or are they there always? When do the impacts get to a point that the proposed improvements' benefits would be lost?</p>	<p>As part of the NEPA phase, traffic volumes will be extrapolated based on known existing and future traffic volumes with the objective of determining when the referenced outside improvements would be needed due to increased congestion.</p> <p>The extrapolation discussed above will provide AHTD with an approximate time frame for when the benefits of the proposed I-30 PEL improvements would be reduced because of outside congestion.</p>	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓



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3	Email 04/01/15	Walter Malone, Planning Manager, City of Little Rock	Also need to address what impacts there might be to the trolley line and Central Arkansas Library facility on 2 nd Street between River Market Avenue and Cumberland Street. If currently there is not the design detail to assure what-if any impact there will be, then it should be stated there could be impacts and that the bid documents for design/construction would require the ultimate design address these issues.	<p>Based on the preliminary, planning-level I-30 PEL Recommendation alignment, permanent direct adverse impacts to the Central Arkansas Library and River Rail Streetcar system are not anticipated. Temporary construction impacts could be possible; however best management practices during construction would be implemented, as applicable, to minimize potential impacts to the greatest degree possible.</p> <p>Noise associated with the construction of the project is difficult to predict. Heavy machinery, the major source of noise in construction, is constantly moving in unpredictable patterns. However, construction normally occurs during daylight hours when occasional loud noises are more tolerable. Noise receivers are not expected to be exposed to construction noise for a long duration; therefore, any extended disruption of normal activities is not expected. Provisions will be included in the plans and specifications that require the contractor to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction noise through abatement measures such as work-hour controls and proper maintenance of muffler systems.</p> <p>As more detailed schematic development occurs during the Schematic/NEPA portion of project development, temporary construction impacts would be more clearly defined, and potential direct impacts to the library and streetcar system, as well as other environmental constraints would be reassessed, as necessary. In addition, indirect and cumulative impact evaluations would be completed as part of the NEPA analysis.</p>	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓
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4	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	<p>The screen/ modeling process thus far have provided the conclusion that the 10 lane C/D collector road is the best build alternative for peak road performance in 2040. The transportation modeling indicates that the 8 lane C/D reasonable alternative has potential to be the most effective build and best for transit ridership potential. We agree that since the potential for driver delays in this alternative is higher; transit would play a larger role. Since transit ridership was not modeled the quantity is unknown. It is assumed that transit would be a more attractive alternative given the highway volumes but does not account for transit as a mode choice.</p>	<p>A transit study was performed for the I-30 PEL and provided to Rock Region METRO. Transit ridership was modeled for a highway-based express route system in the I-30 PEL study area at a high level based on forecasted work trip patterns from the MPO and empirical data from the I-35 express bus on shoulder service that opened in Kansas City in 2012. To date, the I-35 bus on shoulder project has demonstrated an 8% increase in transit ridership along an existing urban commuter route to downtown.</p> <p>Transit ridership along the I-30 corridor was estimated in the range of 2,000 to 2,600 daily trips. It was estimated that 560 to 710 peak hour-peak direction transit riders would cross the Arkansas River on I-30 for a 6-lane facility. When capacity is added to the I-30 corridor, forecasted transit ridership for the express bus on shoulder route is expected to decline. Forecasted 2040 design year highway volumes were reduced by the forecasted transit ridership in the study corridor.</p> <p>Although transit is expected to perform better for an 8-lane alternative compared to a 10-lane alternative, it should be noted that those differences are fairly minimal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-30 Express Bus Transit over the I-30 Arkansas River Bridge: during peak periods, reduction of 565 vehicles for 8 lanes compared to 523 vehicles for 10 lanes, a difference of 42 vehicles. * • Bus on shoulder over the I-30 Arkansas River Bridge: during peak periods, reduction of 34 vehicles for 8 lanes compared to 31 vehicles for 10-lanes, a difference of 3 vehicles. * (continued next page) 	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓
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4	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	(Continued from previous page)	Moreover, transit is only one of 60 performance measures grouped into mobility, safety, cost and environmental categories analyzed in relation to the project's study goals. The 10-Lane C/D Alternative was identified as the top alternative because it comprehensively best addressed the I-30 study goals.			
5	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	The added highway lanes on the 10 lane options could be advantageous for transit use. If one of the additional lanes were designated as HOV and could be used by transit at peak hours; even with the traffic projected volumes could easily accommodate transit used in shared ramp conditions. Another concept for the 10 lane design would be to use the "extra" lane as a dedicated bus lane until the traffic volume warranted use of the complete build out. The "extra" lane could be used by Transit as a BRT/ Express Bus lane building the transit capacity up front. The extra lane would then transition to HOV and Express Bus providing future transportation mode options as the community population expands. Rock Region METRO has future plans which include expanded Express Bus and BRT service in the greater Pulaski County area.	<p>Comment noted. Projected design year traffic volumes are expected to warrant two additional lanes in each direction to attain desired I-30 PEL study goals. If the number of lanes in the corridor were reduced by designating it as a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane or transit only lane, congestion would be expected. This is evidenced by the fact that the 8-lane C/D Alternative demonstrated congestion problems. The shoulder acts as a dedicated, limited speed flex lane during congested periods or during an incident. Additionally, it is anticipated that buses would not need a dedicated "extra" lane immediately following opening year because all lanes would be operating at a good level of service with no advantage to transit.</p> <p>HOV lanes around the country are being converted to high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes because public sentiment has shifted to the view that HOV lanes are under-utilized. HOT lanes are selling the excess capacity from an HOV lane to single occupancy vehicles as a toll. It was determined early in the study that a HOT lane should be part of a system-wide approach studied by Metroplan, rather than a solution for just this portion of the metropolitan highway system. (continued next page)</p>	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓



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5	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	(Continued from previous page)	<p>The PEL Recommendation avoids infrastructure that would appear underutilized. Even with the 10-lane facility, all lanes would be necessary to accommodate peak travel volumes. Current transit plans do not include transit service levels that would warrant dedicated lanes or give the impression that the “extra” lane was utilized. Shoulder use by buses is considered a more efficient use of infrastructure.</p> <p>In the spirit of cooperation, collaboration and transparency, the Study Team met with CATA (Rock Region METRO) on August 28, 2015 to review the CATA Master Plan, discuss how the I-30 PEL Study transit alternatives related to this master plan, and to present the draft I-30 PEL Transit Report. CATA was given the opportunity to provide input on the draft transit report and the Study Team incorporated this input, as applicable. The Study Team subsequently met with CATA on November 6, 2014 to present and discuss the final I-30 PEL Study Transit Report. Throughout both of these meetings, CATA expressed favor for the bus on shoulder concept.</p>			
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6	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	The package we received did not include ramp design options as shown in the meeting; however we would like to comment on a few points. Expanding ramp capacity in North Little Rock would accelerate the neighborhood deterioration along the I-30 corridor by cutting off pedestrian and bicycle options at street level. Pedestrian access to transit stops is a primary driver for ridership.	Ramp configurations were modified to improve mobility and safety throughout the corridor. Some of the existing ramps were closed and others were modified to meet current safety standards. Although designed to handle higher capacities, ramp configurations would also include considerations for bicyclists/pedestrians at each location. Furthermore, bridges along the project corridor would be widened/lengthened, thereby opening up east-west connectivity as well as allowing more open space for bicycle/pedestrian access. Accommodating bicycle/pedestrian access was identified as an important goal of the study, but also by stakeholders in the first visioning workshop held as part of the PEL Study. Bicycle/pedestrian access would continue to be coordinated with stakeholders and planners as part of the second visioning workshop scheduled to occur during the NEPA process.	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓
7	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	The proposed simplification of the ramp to downtown Little Rock and the Clinton Center we concur is a good idea. It will help street connectivity in downtown, benefitting both bus and streetcar service. The only design request is to provide a left hand turn onto Cumberland Street so the bus can access the highway in both inbound and outbound directions from our central hub the River City Travel Center. Currently, we are able to move in the outbound directions but must route via I-630 in the inbound direction. Accessing the RCTC from the I-30 inbound direction would speed service and relive bus/ car traffic conflicts on the I-630 ramps in tough crossing traffic conditions.	Comment noted. Design refinements at the Cantrell Road and Cumberland Street intersection would be evaluated under NEPA with the goal of enlarging the turning radius for buses, thereby providing buses inbound access to Rock Region METRO's central hub facility (River City Travel Center) from I-30. This evaluation of the Cantrell Road and Cumberland Street intersection has been included in the <i>I-30 PEL to NEPA Transition Report</i> as an "analysis to be studied in greater detail through NEPA."	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓



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8	Email 04/24/15	Kathleen Lambert, Rock Region METRO	Lastly any new overpass bridges which connect east and west within the city must maintain pedestrian and bicycle connections. As mentioned previously it is important for existing and future transit service.	See response to Comment #6.	N/A	JLH/ 4/24/15	✓
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* See the Transit Report included as part of the I-30 PEL Traffic and Safety Report (**Appendix F** of the PEL Report)