

PEL PROCESS



What is the Interstate 30 Planning and Environmental Linkages Study?

AHTD is dedicated to working with the community to provide safe and reliable transportation solutions for Arkansas. As part of this mission, we are beginning the community discussion and visioning process for transportation improvements along I-30 in central Arkansas. The study area includes I-30 from I-40 in the north to I-530 in the south, including the Arkansas River Bridge, as well as I-40 from JFK Boulevard east to U.S. 67. The Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process will be followed for the I-30 study and will identify and document the transportation needs and potential improvements for the study area.

What is the PEL process?

The PEL process was established by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to provide a more efficient process of identifying, evaluating, and selecting preferred transportation improvements. This process allows early, planning-level decisions to be carried forward to accelerate future National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) activities.

What are the benefits of the PEL process?

In addition to informing and expediting the NEPA process, the PEL process will provide an opportunity for early coordination with the public as well as local, state, and federal agencies in a transparent and collaborative environment. By working together, alternatives and avoidance measures can be developed at a local level.

Why is the PEL process needed for the I-30 improvements?

A feasibility study prepared jointly by AHTD and Metroplan in 2003 identified the need for transportation improvements for crossings of the Arkansas River. Some challenges identified include:

- Increasing traffic congestion, operational concerns, and travel times
- Inadequate roadway capacity
- Roadway safety
- Structural and functional roadway and bridge deficiencies

The PEL study will expedite the process of identifying a proposed solution or series of solutions to these challenges.