

PEL Overview

A PEL study process is a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process. A benefit of the PEL study process is to remove duplication between planning studies and future environmental review and permitting processes. PEL studies can bring transportation projects to construction sooner by shortening the project delivery process. Benefits of the PEL study process can include:

- Clarified project definition and earlier identification of key environmental resources
- Stronger agency, tribal government, and public relationships
- Better outcomes during design and construction of projects
- More holistic development of transportation improvement strategies
- Enhanced grant opportunities and cost and time savings

Learn more by visiting:

- Federal Highway Administration PEL information¹ (dot.gov)
- The Alaska DOT&PF PEL Guidebook² (alaska.gov)

Who is Involved in a PEL Study?

According to Alaska DOT&PF’s PEL Guidebook, “a PEL study project team membership can be flexible, depending on the focus of the PEL study.” Below is a list of people and organizations who typically have a role in PEL studies within Alaska:

- DOT&PF State Environmental Office (SEO)
- DOT&PF Program Development and Planning
- DOT&PF Environmental
- DOT&PF Preliminary Engineering
- Tribal Governments
- Federal Resource and Permitting Agencies
- State Resource and Permitting Agencies
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- Non-metropolitan Local Officials Responsible for Transportation Planning
- General Public
- Stakeholders

The SEO has a noteworthy review and concurrence role in the PEL process. If the SEO concurs on key points of the PEL study, then components of the PEL study can potentially be carried forward into the environmental review stage of the project.

Benefits of the PEL Process for Seward – Glenn Connection

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), Central Region, is conducting a PEL study to consider potential transportation improvements in Anchorage. The PEL study gives us an opportunity to engage the community and stakeholders in identifying transportation needs and developing and evaluating alternatives. This process will help DOT&PF:

- Identify potential benefits and impacts to communities, the environment, and the economy early in the planning stage, making the project more efficient and cost-effective.

¹ https://www.environment.fhwa.dot.gov/env_initiatives/pel.aspx

² https://dot.alaska.gov/rfpdocs/25213030/pel_guidebook.pdf

- Engage partner agencies, stakeholders, and the public, building project awareness and support through transparent and consistent communication.
- Provide opportunities early and often for the public to provide input that shapes the project.
- Narrow down the range of project alternatives to carry into future environmental review, design work, and construction funding.

What will be Documented in the PEL Study Report?

Federal regulations require that specific planning products be documented in a Final PEL Study:

- Purpose and need (or goals and objectives)
- Alternatives development and evaluation
- Alternatives eliminated and why
- Alternatives recommended to be advanced into NEPA and why
- Results of transportation analyses
- Basic description of the environmental setting
- Summary of agency coordination and public involvement
- NEPA Assignment Disclaimer Language
- Issues for further consideration
- Implementation plan or action plan
- PEL Questionnaire
- Technical reports

Additionally, the PEL process must document relevant decisions in a form that is “identifiable and available for review during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping process and can be appended to or referenced in the NEPA document” (23 U.S.C. 168 and Appendix A of 23 CFR 450). This requirement helps accelerate the environmental review process, ensuring work already accomplished as a part of the PEL study isn’t unnecessarily duplicated.

Get Involved

you’d like to stay updated or share your thoughts on the project...

- Visit sewardglennconnection.com, where you can sign up for email updates and find information on upcoming events.
- Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/AlaskaDOTPF.
- Reach out to the project team via:



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