Planning and Environment Linkages: Overview and Examples

TRB Workshop on Environmental Analysis

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Office of Environment and Planning
Washington, DC
Planning and Environment Linkages (PEL): What is it?

- An APPROACH to transportation decision-making
- A PROGRAM promoting tools and resources
- Supports FHWA Planning Regulations
Planning and Environment Linkages: An Integrated, Systems Perspective

- Land Use System
- Transportation System
- Water Resources System
- Other Natural, Cultural Resource Systems

Integrated Approach
opportunities to support multiple community goals and improve quality of life
Integrated Planning, Consultation

Guidance/Appendix A

NEPA, Environmental Review Process

Project-level Decision
Transportation Resource Agency

System-level Planning

Integrated Planning, Consultation

Guidance/Appendix A

Linking Planning and NEPA

NEPA, Environmental Review Process

S-LU 6001

S-LU 6002

Project-level Decision

Project-level Decision

System-level Planning
Transportation Resource Agency

System-level Planning

Project-level Decision

Integrated Planning, Consultation

S-LU 6001

Guidance/Appendix A

Linking Planning and NEPA

NEPA, Environmental Review Process

S-LU 6002

System-level Planning
Transportation Resource Agency

System-level Planning

Integrated Planning, Consultation

Guidance/Appendix A

NEPA, Environmental Review Process

System-level Planning

Project-level Decision

S-LU 6001

S-LU 6002

Linking Planning and NEPA
Expected Benefits of PEL

- Relationship-building
- Process efficiency
- On-the-ground outcomes
Important Elements of PEL

- Intra-Agency Coordination
- Inter-Agency Coordination
- Data Sharing and Analysis
Intra-Agency Coordination

- Obtain executive level commitment to a more comprehensive process
- Increase coordination among planning, environment, GIS, and IT staff

Sample Actions:
- Conduct inter-disciplinary meetings
- Host cross-training sessions
- Develop agency-wide guidance
Inter-Agency Coordination

• Involve resource agencies early in transportation planning

• Sample Actions:
  - Establish interagency work groups or committees
  - Host workshops (e.g., Linking Conservation and Transportation Planning)
  - Establish MOU’s/MOA’s
Data Sharing and Analysis

• Share data/analyses among agencies

• Overlay proposed transportation projects on identified sensitive resources

• Data and Analysis Tools:
  - Geographic Information Systems
  - Project Screening Tools
Some PEL Examples
California: Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP)

- Incorporates 3 formerly distinct plans:
  - General Plan for land use and housing
  - Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan for plant and animal conservation
  - Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) for highways and transit systems

- CETAP transportation corridor planning project identified as priority project under EO 13274
Colorado: Strategic Transportation, Environmental, and Planning Process for Urban Places (STEP-UP)

- Improved process and methodology for addressing environmental impacts of transportation projects at earliest possible stage
- GIS-based tools for identifying impacts early
- Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment process to understand effects of transportation development on land use and environment
- Creation of environmental screening GIS web-based application
North Carolina: Environmental Stewardship Policy

- Integrated planning strategy of NCDOT
- Merger01 process - streamlined project development and permitting
- Ecosystem Enhancement Program - integrates watershed and transportation planning
- Integrated Transportation Planning and Project Development Process – identified 8 linkages between planning and NEPA
North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG)

- Created “Transportation Resource Agency Consultation and Environmental Streamlining” (TRACES) Program
- Established working group to advise long range plan update/planning activities
- Hosted Linking Conservation and Transportation Planning Workshop
- Receiving FHWA Grant to implement Regional Ecosystem Framework
- **Website:**
  
  www.dfwinfo.com/traces/
### Case Studies of Innovative Practices

Each of the following case studies summarizes the experiences of a state or metropolitan area that decided to change its approach to conducting planning and environmental processes. Focusing on the process of change, the case studies summarize why and how change was achieved, some of the challenges encountered, and a few lessons learned. Click on the title to view the complete report.

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PEL and Related FHWA Activities

Planning

Eco-Logical
Integrated
Planning Work
Group
Linking
Conservation &
Transportation
Planning
Context
Sensitive
Solutions

Environment
FHWA PEL Website


- Overview of approach and concepts
- Tips on identifying activities to implement approach
- Descriptions of effective practices
- Links to other related information resources
- Related guidance, regulations, and SAFETEA-LU provisions

Help us build the knowledge base! Send comments, info to:
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