



US 2 Trestle Capacity Improvements and Westbound Trestle Replacement PEL Study

Technical Working Group, Meeting #1 Summary

Tuesday, March 26, 2:00 p.m.

Microsoft Teams Meeting

Meeting Purpose

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) hosted the first meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) for the US 2 Trestle Capacity Improvements and Westbound Trestle Replacement PEL Study to develop a common understanding of the current PEL process, and gather feedback on the draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Purpose and Need statements.

TWG attendees:

- Adam Osbekoff, Snoqualmie Indian Tribes
- Brook Chesterfield, Snohomish County
- Chris Simmons, Community Transit
- Corey Hert, City of Everett
- Elisa Albury, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Eric Epstein, The Boeing Company
- John Evans, Sound Transit
- Kathryn Boris, Community Transit
- Kristen Pennington, I-5/Cascadia Program
- Matthew Pahs, FHWA
- Max Phan, City of Marysville
- Michael Villnave, FHWA
- Paula Reeves, Washington State Transportation Commission
- Rashid Dolor, Community Transit
- Sheri Call, Washington Trucking Association
- Todd Haberlack, The Boeing Company
- Tom Hood, City of Everett

Consultant team attendees:

- Anne Broache, WSP
- Chris Wellander, WSP
- Erinn Ellig, Parametrix
- Jared Nakamoto, WSP
- Jennifer Rash, PRR
- Larissa King Rawlins, WSP
- Michael Horntvedt, Parametrix
- Michelle Auster, PRR

WSDOT participants

- April Delchamps, WSDOT
- Curt Winningham, WSDOT
- Eliza McGovern, WSDOT
- Lisa Sakata, WSDOT
- Josh Shippy, WSDOT
- Kristen Pennington, WSDOT
- Kritchaya Uppajunto, WSDOT
- Kyengo Ndile, WSDOT
- Maraea Skeen, WSDOT
- Mike Crimmins, WSDOT
- Oteberry Kedelty, WSDOT

Welcome and Introductions

WSDOT and the consultant study team welcomed attendees to the first TWG meeting with a safety moment, introductions, and agenda. They asked attendees to introduce themselves in the chat and invited them to answer a Mentimeter poll question: Provide one or two words that describe travel on the US 2 trestle today. Input is captured in the word cloud below with the size of the word indicating how often it was mentioned. The word “congested” was mentioned the most, which is why it is the largest in the image.



PEL Study Overview

- WSDOT briefly reviewed previous planning studies led by WSDOT and others, including City of Everett, at or near the US 2 trestle dating back to 2009., It was noted that the 2021 US 2 Westbound Trestle Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study provided recommendations that are guiding the current PEL study, including expanding the study area to include Interstate 5, considering multi-modal mobility options;, and continuing to conduct robust tribal, community, and agency engagement.
- The intent of the current PEL Study is to hear from a broad range of voices and directly adopt a Purpose and Need statement and a range of alternatives into NEPA to streamline a future NEPA process.
- The PEL Study process is very similar to planning processes you might have previously participated in. The biggest difference is the PEL Study process includes four FHWA concurrence points.
 - 1: Determine reason for PEL Study and desired outcomes
 - 2: Purpose and Need and Project Limits
 - 3: Evaluate and Screen Alternatives and Identify Red-Flag Environmental Impacts and Potential Mitigation
 - 4: Finalize PEL document
- The PEL Study steps include a pre-screening followed by a Level 1 and Level 2 screening. Level 1 is high-level and less intensive, more qualitative. Level 2 is deeper analysis more intensive, more quantitative.
- Ongoing community engagement will include focused engagement with stakeholders and the public to allow for review and comment on the NEPA Purpose and Need, Range of Alternatives, and the Draft PEL Study

- There are other existing or planned projects in the study area that require ongoing information sharing, including the City of Everett's I-5/US 2 Interchange Planning Study. Additionally, the study team is regularly coordinating with FHWA, the WSDOT Toll Division, and other study area jurisdictions.
- In addition to community engagement, WSDOT will collect feedback from Technical Working Group (TWG), the Executive Advisory Group (EAG), the RAC, and tribal partners to inform decision-making with FHWA.
- WSDOT had planned to form an Equity Advisory Committee, however, recent listening sessions confirm that many organizations in the study area are overcommitted to other efforts and voiced little desire to participate in another committee. The study team is currently reevaluating how to engage priority populations. WSDOT welcomed RAC feedback and suggestions on that approach.

TWG Roles and Responsibilities

- WSDOT asked the group another Mentimeter poll question: ***What makes an advisory group successful?*** Input is captured in the word cloud below. The term "collaboration" was mentioned the most:



- The TWG will meet six times over the course of the PEL study.
- Through those meetings, the TWG will review technical information and share information to their elected officials or leadership and other stakeholders.
- WSDOT showed an overview of the PEL process, including TWG meetings, their high-level agendas, and how they overlap with other PEL committee meetings.

Study Updates & Engagement

- The study engagement lead reviewed PEL study community engagement objectives, including consideration for the HEAL Act. Findings from the engagement area demographic analysis included language access needs, with planned translated materials in Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
- The study team has completed 14 listening sessions with representatives from area community based organizations, neighborhood groups, social and human service organizations, and advocacy groups that serve a variety of interests like active transportation. A final listening session with the Lake Stevens Community Resource Center is planned for early April.
- Key themes from the listening sessions include:

- Communities on the east side of the trestle are heavily reliant on it for accessing essential needs like medical care and jobs, as well as amenities like retail and restaurants.
- Access to active transportation facilities and transit options could be improved.
- There are mixed feelings on tolling, with strong opposition from communities on the east side of the trestle.
- Upcoming engagement milestones include a spring 2024 online open house for public review of the draft NEPA Purpose & Need statement, with future public comment on the draft alternatives and the draft PEL Study report in 2025.
- The study website is live at <https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/us-2-trestle-capacity-improvements-westbound-trestle-replacement>

Initial Transportation Data & Analysis

Traffic Data Collection and Planning Approach

- WSDOT gave an overview of the data collection and validation approach. This project uses modeling to incorporate data points on transportation patterns and other social measurements such as households and employment information.
- All data collection helps to determine the needs for this PEL Study, and to make the need for improvements clear.
- Initial data included land use growth in households and employment from 2018 to 2050. On the east side of the trestle, the number of households is forecast to grow by 112% and employment by 44%. On the west side, the number of households is forecast to grow by 241% and employment by 86%. Notably, the number of households in downtown Everett is expected to grow by 1143% and employment by 306%.
- WSDOT also reviewed year 2050 transportation system assumptions for the roadway and transit.

Comments/questions:

- Chris Simmons, Community Transit, said the 2050 transportation system assumptions should include the Community Transit Swift Silver Bus Rapid Transit line that will be in operation by then. Michael Horntvedt from the study team later noted that the traffic modeling assumptions do include the Community Transit planned elements.

Existing Traffic Conditions

- The study team described current and future morning 3-hour peak period westbound traffic volumes on the trestle, including a projected 36% increase by 2050. On the east side of the trestle, traffic mostly originates from the Lake Stevens area and will only increase in the future. Areas north of Lake Stevens will see a slight increase in westbound trestle trips, while areas south are expected to see a reduction in westbound trestle trips by 2050.
- Westbound trips from the trestle end in common destinations that include downtown Everett and the southwest Everett industrial area. Trips to downtown Everett are expected to increase by 15% by 2050—which will replace the Boeing/Paine Field area as the major attractor for westbound morning peak period trestle trips.
- Future demand is consistent with regional land use growth projections. If the trestle is tolled, traffic patterns could change, which will be accounted for in the Dynamic Traffic Assignment (DTA) model.
- Vehicle miles traveled per population are expected to decrease in the preliminary traffic analysis area and the DTA modeling area, indicating that a) population is increasing and

trips are shorter, and b) there will be an increase in transit trips in the study area in the future with the implementation of Everett Link and increased transit service across the trestle and within the study area.

- The study team also reviewed existing and projected bottlenecks in the study area during morning and evening peak hours, including:
 - SR 204/20th Street on-ramp (morning)
 - US 2/SR 204 ramp (morning)
 - US 2/I-5 ramp connection (morning and afternoon)
 - SR 204 at Sunnyside Boulevard (afternoon)
 - East end of the trestle (afternoon)
- The key takeaways from the existing traffic conditions are:
 - The I-5/US 2 interchange is challenging in the morning and afternoon peak period.
 - Speeds degrade below 20 MPH in many areas and travel time variability could double in the morning and evening peak period by 2050.

Comments/questions:

- Sherri Call, WTA, asked if the traffic data includes all modes. Michael Horntvedt from the study team clarified that it includes all traffic, including cars, transit, carpools and freight. He also noted that all vehicular modes experience the same level of congestion as there are currently no managed lanes or other facilities on the trestle to provide specific modes, such as transit or carpools, a travel time advantage.

Active Transportation

- The study team reviewed current and planned active transportation facilities near or on the trestle. There are no active transportation facilities on the westbound trestle.
- In terms of accessing the two-way path on the eastbound trestle, the study team reviewed bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) data. The LTS rating is related to the comfort active transportation users feel, with lower LTS associated with greater separation between vehicles and active transportation modes, and lower vehicle speeds. LTS level 1 feels safe and comfortable for all users, while levels 3 and 4 represent stressful conditions that many people will not or cannot use.
- Most of the facilities on the west and east side of the trestle are LTS 3 and 4.

Crash Data

- The study team shared crash data on fatal and serious injury crashes in the study area between 2018 to 2022.
- The highest contributing factor to the fatal and serious injury crashes were alcohol and drugs (over 30%).
- Of all crashes, the most common were rear ends and side swipes, which tend to occur with congested flow in the bottleneck and highway interchange areas.

Discussion: Draft Purpose & Need

- WSDOT asked the group a final Mentimeter poll question: ***What is your top priority for the US 2 Trestle study?*** Input is captured in the word cloud below. “Safety” was the term mentioned most frequently, while “congestion relief” and “resiliency” were mentioned the second most often:



- WSDOT gave a general overview of what a purpose and need statement is.
- WSDOT also indicated that Consistent with 23 U.S.C.168, this PEL Study intends to adopt the Purpose and Need statement into the future National Environmental Policy Act review process.
- The draft NEPA Purpose & Need statement shared with the TWG was reviewed by FHWA.
- Feedback from the PEL committees and the public is an important element and will be considered before the statement is adopted through FHWA Concurrence Point #2.
- Draft NEPA Purpose: The purpose of this PEL Study is to develop long-term, equitable transportation solutions to 1.) improve **multimodal mobility** to and across the US 2 trestle, 2.) improve **safety** to and across the US 2 trestle, and 3.) address the **resiliency** of the westbound trestle.
- Draft NEPA Needs - **Multimodal Mobility**: The US 2 trestle faces challenges accommodating all transportation modes, which limits equitable travel options.
 - Vehicular – All motorized vehicles using the US 2 trestle face recurring traffic bottlenecks during the weekday morning and afternoon peak travel periods.
 - Freight – Recurring bottlenecks affect the reliability of freight truck movement across US 2, which is a designated freight route for the movement of goods.
 - High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) and Transit – Due to a lack of dedicated facilities, existing HOV and transit using the US 2 trestle face the same bottlenecks as general purpose traffic.
 - Active Transportation – There are no bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the westbound trestle, existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities on the eastbound trestle do not serve all ages and abilities, and there are missing connections to existing active transportation facilities at either end of the trestle.
- Draft Need - **Safety**: Serious injury and fatal crashes are reported on WSDOT facilities in the preliminary study area.
 - Data supporting **safety**:
 - WSDOT has a Target Zero goal to eliminate crashes and traffic fatalities, which is part of why WSDOT has incorporated safety as a Need for this project.
 - There have been 3,708 total crashes in the preliminary study area between 2018 and 2022.
- Draft Need- **Resiliency**: The westbound US 2 trestle lacks resiliency, which presents a risk of disrupted travel on this critical route.
 - Data supporting **resiliency**:

- Seismic Resilience: Westbound trestle is vulnerable to instability in the event of liquefaction from seismic activity.
 - Asset Management: Westbound trestle is classified as functionally obsolete; planned shutdowns and lane closures require lengthy detours.
 - Climate and Natural Hazard Resilience: US 2 is identified as a highly critical asset/lifeline route in WSDOT's Climate Impact Vulnerability Assessment.
 - Operational Resilience: Ongoing maintenance costs related to log jams and culvert repairs.
- WSDOT asked for the TWG's input on the draft NEPA Purpose and Need statements, including whether key items are missing and whether the data presented in the meeting helps to support the draft statements as presented.

Comments/Questions:

- Sheri Call, WTA, noted that the trestle is subject to frequent freight traffic restrictions. Have there been any updates on issues with freight mobility on this bridge? What have been the restrictions on freight over the last decade? Michael Horntvedt from the study team said we do not have the information on hand but will look into it. He noted that the US 2 corridor was downgraded from a T1 to a T2 facility since the 2021 PEL Study was completed.
- Sheri Call, WTA, shared that addressing resiliency is very important for this project, especially with the potential for liquefaction and earthquakes in this region. She said she was happy to see resiliency in the need statements.

Next Steps / Action Items

- The study team reviewed upcoming activities and the evaluation framework for identifying a range of alternatives.
- Upcoming meetings and action items include:
 - The study team will facilitate the first meeting of the Resource Agency Committee on March 27.
 - TWG members should provide comments on the draft NEPA Purpose & Need by Monday, April 1 by emailing Jen Rash or Oteberry Kedelty. Comments received after that time could be considered for the public online open house, and will be considered in the final Purpose & Need presented to FHWA for Concurrence Point #2.
 - The study team anticipates scheduling TWG Meeting #2 this summer.
 - The study team will provide information about the upcoming public online open house to TWG members in May.
 - The study team will look at the history for freight restrictions on the trestle.