

 <p style="text-align: center;">STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Policy and Procedure</p>	POLICY AND PROCEDURE NUMBER 09.03.070	PAGE 1 of 3
	EFFECTIVE DATE <p style="text-align: center;">June 21, 2021</p>	
SUBJECT Planning and Environmental Linkages Studies	SUPERSEDES New	DATED N/A
CHAPTER Planning, Budget, and Research	SECTION Planning	APPROVED BY Signature on File

PURPOSE

To establish a policy and procedure (P&P) related to the initiation of Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) studies and the programming of projects recommended by PEL studies into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). This policy ensures that the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) uses PEL studies appropriately. This policy requires that projects initiated with a PEL study can be delivered in an expedient manner, and that project phasing and funding strategies for complex projects have been developed.

POLICY

A PEL study is not required for any project but it is DOT&PF policy that PEL studies should primarily be considered for proposed facility projects which are anticipated to significantly impact the federal-aid program. Projects that are anticipated to significantly impact the federal-aid program are projects with a preliminary planning level cost estimates greater than \$100 million for the entire project.

PEL studies may also be requested for smaller scale facility projects to provide clarification of the transportation need, or when there is a need without a clear solution or alternatives, or as approved by the Director of Program Development and Statewide Planning. PEL studies may be used to assist in planning decisions and for planning analysis. These decisions and analyses, for example, can be used to identify and prioritize future projects, develop the purpose and need for a project, determine project size or length, and/or develop and refine a range of alternatives. PEL studies may not be appropriate for any project where construction is expected/desired within the next 5 (five) years.

For all PEL studies the Director of Program Development and Statewide Planning will consult with the Commissioner's Office prior to approving the funding and initiation of the PEL study. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Director of Program Development on a case-by-case basis.

This policy does not apply to PEL studies funded by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), however the MPO should clearly indicate proposed or anticipated PEL studies in their Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Completion of a PEL study does not guarantee the approval of a project or project funding.

PROCEDURE

PEL study requests will be evaluated through the STIP nomination process, as a planning project, which will include scoring and ranking according to the requirements of either the funding program or based on capital improvement priorities.

PEL Study Nominations for Inclusion into the STIP require:

- PEL study description including anticipated study area and geographic location. Timeline consistent with funding requirements.
- Evaluation and demonstration of project complexity and significance.
- Approval of the Director of Program Development and Statewide Planning and the Regional Director.

Development of a PEL study:

- PEL studies may only begin after funding is authorized through the STIP.
- PEL studies are to be developed in consultation with DOT&PF design, planning and environmental staff.
- For guidance related to the content and organization of a PEL study, project managers should adhere to the DOT&PF PEL Guidebook.

Draft Final PEL Consistency Review and Signature:

A consistency review must be requested and completed prior to finalization of the PEL study.

- A PEL study requires a consistency review completed by the Statewide Environmental Manager and approval prior to submittal to the Regional Director for their review and concurrence.

- This review is necessary to ensure that the PEL is consistent with 23 U.S.C 168(c), 23 CFR 450, Appendix A, and Federal and DOT&PF guidance.

Regional Concurrence Review and Signature:

- After the SEO consistency review and approval, the PEL study must be provided to the Regional Director for concurrence and signature.
- The PEL Study will be considered as a complete and final document after both the Regional Director signature for concurrence and the consistency approval signature have been obtained.

DEFINITIONS

Consistency Review: A document review by the Statewide Environmental Manager that ensures all federal and state PEL requirements and guidance have been adequately addressed. This is the final step before submittal to the Regional Director for concurrence.

Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study: A transportation planning study that represents a collaborative and integrated approach to transportation decision-making that 1) considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, and 2) uses the information, analysis, and products developed during planning to inform the environmental review process.

AUTHORITY

23 USC 168

Appendix A to 23 CFR Part 450

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITY

Division of Program Development and Statewide Planning

DISTRIBUTION

All department employees via the DOT&PF website.