

DRAFT TAC MEETING MINUTES

North I-25 PEL

Technical Advisory Committee
Thursday, April 4, 2013
1:00 PM to 4:00 PM

LOCATION: Thornton Police Department Training Center

PREPARED BY: Alex Pulley, FHU

ATTENDEES: See Attached Sign-in Sheet

I. Welcome and Introductions

Andy Stratton, CDOT Project Manager, gave a quick introduction and welcomed the group. Andy stated the goals of the meeting and presented the agenda.

II. Purpose and Need

Holly Buck offered a reminder about the Purpose and Need. Purpose and Need has been updated with supporting technical data. Holly reviewed the project needs defined by the TAC last August and pointed out the data that supports the identified needs. Holly asked for questions, but there were none. Holly asked TAC members to review the draft Purpose and Need by next week and provide comments.

III. Corridor Conditions

Lyle DeVries reminded the team that it has been one year since the TAC last saw the Corridor Conditions Report. Lyle identified changes to the report and discussed the 2035 No Action DynusT model results which have been added to the report. Lyle discussed anticipated 2035 trip making along the corridor, which will include a significant number of local trips along I-25 with growth in volume from the north to the south end of the study area.

a. DynusT Model 2035 No Action

Lyle explained that the report now includes 2035 No Action DynusT findings for the corridor in the morning southbound and afternoon northbound. Importantly, the managed lanes will provide relief but not alleviate all congestion in the south half of the corridor and significant congestion will build in the morning southbound north of I20th Avenue. Lyle described how to interpret the DynusT model results for the 2035 No Action alternative.

TAC members had questions about the southbound results between 120th Avenue and 136th Avenue, questioning why the chart shows light congestion (yellow) instead of heavy congestion (red) as might be expected due to heavy congestion north and south. Lyle will double-check this area. A question was asked if the effect in the southbound direction north of 136th Avenue reflected the change in posted speed from 75 mph to 65 mph. Lyle will review the model to determine if this is the cause.

TAC members had questions about the 2035 No Action alternative between 84th Avenue and Thornton Parkway in the northbound direction. This area is green when there is a big hill. Going uphill for trucks is very impactful. It was stated that intuitively, it should not be green; it should be worse. Jay Hendrickson pointed out that the model is not so precise to capture every nuance of every situation. Jay is more concerned if the model is showing any irregularities.

TAC members also had questions about the reasonableness of trends. We need to be careful on what is shown to the public. We also need to be credible to the public to demonstrate the importance of finding transportation dollars at the ballot box. Modeling needs to pass DOT and FHWA approval to not impede

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projects for this Corridor. The direction of congestion is the most important message. Northbound goes from seven lanes to three at 84th. There was some surprise that congestion is not shown north of 120th, which does not seem to correlate to known land use growth between now and 2035.

IV. Summary of Comments on Initial Screening

Holly Buck reviewed comments received on initial screening. Comments revealed a desire to keep long-term options in the screening matrix; as a result, these projects have now been put in their own category for long-term cross sections for future consideration. These projects have not been included in the components retained for this PEL because the project team does not feel that they can be implemented in near-term. Holly also provided an overview of the screening process chart. Many of the changes resulted from in-depth discussions with FHWA.

Holly identified specifics of changes to previous screening and asked for comments now or within the next week on the Sorting handout. She pointed out that projects retained during the Sorting process will move into Level 1 screening. Holly discussed a sample Level 1 screening evaluation, walking through the initial screening measures. The point was made that we need to switch from comparing just from Purpose and Need to comparing alternatives to each other.

V. Traffic Analysis/Modeling

Steven Marfitano described the overall process of traffic analysis/modeling. Steven explained that a lot of time was spent with FHWA and CDOT to define the methods and assumptions. DynusT is a mixture of macroscopic and microscopic modeling tools useful in evaluating the effects of alternatives on driver behavior and routing in the transportation system. DynusT can provide time based information including the development of bottlenecks and the recovery process. Two models were developed, one for AM and PM. Steven also pointed out that we had to wait for DRCOG to develop its 2010 regional DynusT model to extract the subarea for this study.

Steven explained the calibration process and how the model achieved a 6.5 percent tolerance. It was noted typical standards are 10 percent or 15 percent tolerance. Therefore, the model is expected to have a higher level of precision than is typically accepted in other models.

Lee Cryer asked if only the origination and destination tables were adjusted during calibration or if other factors were adjusted. Steven confirmed that only the origination and destination table values were adjusted. Lee also asked if final origination and destination tables' numbers had been cleared with DRCOG. It would be interesting to see any differences between the DynusT model assumptions compared with DRCOG. Lyle stated that FHU will initiate that comparison with DRCOG.

TAC members suggested that the graphic illustrating the calibration iterations should be better labeled for communication with the public.

VI. Preliminary Transit Results

Keith Borsheim pointed out that to retrieve preliminary transit results we have to use the DRCOG regional model because DynusT does not do transit. Four alternative park and ride locations were tested with new bus service using the latest Compass 4.0 geo-rectified network. The model-predicted parking demand is much greater than capacity at existing park and ride locations. The model indicates that a new park and ride at SH 7 would provide the greatest demand reduction at Wagon Road.

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Drive access trips are represented in the model. There is no turnover or auto occupancy. Volumes and PnRs will be greater than capacity. Further detailed analysis would be necessary to determine future lot size needs.

Lee Cryer pointed out that the transit model comparisons presented to the TAC are good and relevant, but that to determine future park and ride size, more detailed analysis is necessary. All the numbers presented represent demand identified by the travel demand model and include no capacity constraints at the different lots or turnover during the day. Lee will also find out if the east side of the Thornton pnr is being upgraded with FASTER grant funding. Lee Cryer noted that because DRCOG's model ends near Meade, the travel demand model cannot accommodate transit users driving in from outside the model area and using park-n-Ride and transit services.

Keith discussed an assumption within the transit modeling that the North Metro Commuter Rail Line up to 72nd Avenue is included in the travel demand model. This section is currently included in the Fiscally Constrained RTP. Jeanne Shreve expressed interest in understanding the impacts of the North Metro Commuter Rail Line completion being expedited with full completion to SH 7. Current DynusT modeling does not include the impacts of this improvement to I-25 traffic. A question arose about whether this study should be delayed to adjust the model accordingly. However, based on the North Metro EIS and a preliminary analysis completed in the PEL shows that highway volumes in 2025 are affected by only 2 to 3 percent. This information should be provided to show we need both highway and rail improvements. Further discussions will be needed to determine the best way to evaluate the potential impacts of that improvement to this study.

TAC members asked about the potential for evaluating the impact of extending the I-25 Managed Lanes to SH 7 using RAMP money. Specifically, can these be included in the background network. Further discussions will be needed to determine how to accommodate this improvement alternative into the PEL.

Jay Hendrickson indicated that CDOT will discuss this and advise how to move forward.

VII. Schedule

The next TAC meeting is tentatively scheduled for mid May. It is expected that a couple of alternative packages will be established at that meeting, which will lead directly into Level 2 screening. The Preferred Alternative will be selected following the Level 2 analysis and will consist of a package of components. The next step would be to prioritize and phase the Preferred Alternative package. This would involve a combined TAC/EC meeting. This process would lead directly into an Open House in August.

VIII. Other

Gene Putman thanked CDOT for the transit grant to add a 170-space carpool lot at SH 7. The lot is to be built within two years.

IX. Closing

Andy thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions before closing the meeting.