

West Davis Corridor Technical Memorandum 1 EIS PLANNING HORIZON

Revision Dates: September 29, 2009 (Revision 1)
November 17, 2009 (Revision 2)
September 24, 2016 (Revision 3)

Purpose of This Technical Memorandum

The purpose of this memorandum is to describe the planning horizon selected for the West Davis Corridor (WDC) environmental impact statement (EIS) and to gain the approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the lead federal agency, regarding the planning horizon. The horizon year is typically defined as the year for which a transportation plan describes the envisioned transportation system. This is typically the last year of a metropolitan region's 20-year regional transportation plan.

This technical memorandum provides a brief overview of the project, discusses the planning horizon and the process used to evaluate it, and recommends a planning horizon.

Project Overview

FHWA, in cooperation with the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), is in the process of preparing an EIS for a proposed action to address the projected transportation demand in western Davis and Weber Counties. The area under evaluation includes the area west of Interstate 15 (I-15) in Davis and Weber Counties.

Alternatives to be considered include:

- Taking no action (no-build)
- Transportation system management
- Build alternatives for various modes of transportation

Discussion of the Planning Horizon

The initial planning process for the WDC EIS started in September 2009. Definition of the study area originally occurred in the fall of 2009. The project purpose and need and alternatives were developed in 2010 and early 2011. For the Draft EIS, the WDC used the Wasatch Front Regional Council's (WFRC) current regional transportation plan (completed in May 2011) and the travel demand model used for that plan that had a planning horizon of 2040.

Between the Draft EIS and Final EIS, WFRC released a 2015 regional transportation plan (completed in May 2015). To be consistent with the 2015 regional transportation plan, the WDC EIS Management Team (UDOT and its consultants) continued to use the same 2040 planning horizon for the Final EIS. Using 2040 as the planning horizon is consistent with the planning horizon used during the development of the study area, purpose and need, and alternatives for the Draft EIS. For the Final EIS, the WDC EIS

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Management Team will use the 2040 travel demand model that was recently released as part of the 2015 regional transportation plan by WFRC.

The following sections describe the supporting information for selecting the WDC planning horizon.

Planning Process

Sections 1107 and 6001 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and 23 USC 104 and 134 require a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process that is to be conducted by each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in the United States. The MPO transportation planning process must meet the joint FHWA/FTA (Federal Transit Administration) requirements for a 20-year planning horizon. The planning process leads to the adoption of a transportation plan and a transportation improvement plan (TIP) by the designated MPO. The transportation plan and TIP provide for the development and operation of an integrated transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of people and goods. To qualify for FHWA/FTA assistance, projects must be consistent with the adopted plan and TIP.

The WDC project is in WFRC's 2015 regional transportation plan for 2040 (WFRC is the MPO for the WDC project area).

Air Quality Conformity

The Clean Air Act of 1970 and its amendments require that federally funded highway projects be consistent with state air quality goals as set forth in the applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP). The process to ensure this consistency is referred to as *transportation conformity*. Conformity to the SIP ensures that transportation projects will not cause new violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), worsen existing violations of the standards, or delay timely attainment of the relevant standard. Transportation conformity is required for all federally funded transportation projects in areas that have been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as not meeting the NAAQS; these areas are called *non-attainment areas*. A *maintenance area* is a non-attainment area that has not had a recorded violation of the NAAQS in several years and is on its way to being redesignated as an attainment area. Davis and Weber Counties are maintenance areas for ozone.

The MPO (in this case, WFRC) and the responsible state Department of Transportation (in this case, UDOT) must make the air quality conformity determination on the adopted transportation plan at least every 4 years. When WFRC develops the new transportation plan, it must ensure that the plan conforms to air quality requirements before it is approved and accepted by UDOT. The new plan conformity determination must include a new regional emission analysis to the adopted (20-year) planning horizon using the latest planning and emission models. The current WFRC plan is for the year 2040.

If the NEPA process results in a substantially different design concept and project scope than what are assumed in the transportation plan, then the project is subject to project-level reanalysis. The regional emissions analysis requirement in the plan must also be met before the NEPA process is complete. Conformity must be determined again for the plan based on the new project scope before the NEPA process is completed and the project is approved. Therefore, because of the expected project schedule,

the WDC EIS must be consistent with the expected 2040 planning horizon used in the WFRC 2015 regional transportation plan.

Traffic Modeling

Version 8.1 of the WFRC travel demand model includes the socioeconomic, demographic, and land-use data for the 2040 planning horizon to be consistent with the 2015 regional transportation plan. The WDC EIS Management Team refined the traffic analysis zones (TAZs) within the model to better predict travel demand for the WDC project, since the current study area TAZs used in the model are very large. The WDC EIS Management Team will coordinate all refinements to the model with WFRC and local municipalities as needed.

Recommendation for the Planning Horizon

Based on the above information, the WDC EIS Management Team recommends that the WDC EIS process use the 2040 planning horizon during development of the study area, purpose and need, and alternatives. This planning horizon would be consistent with FHWA/FTA guidance on long-range transportation planning and would comply with the requirements of NEPA and the Clean Air Act.