

The slide features a header with the '37 CORRIDOR PROJECTS' logo and the title 'RESILIENT SR37' in large green letters, with 'MARIN • SONOMA • NAPA • SOLANO' underneath. A background image shows a road with a car. The main content area contains the title '1. Introduction to the SR 37 Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study' in green. A video inset in the bottom right shows a woman in a red jacket. The footer includes the slogan 'ONE CORRIDOR, ONE TEAM, MANY SOLUTIONS.' and logos for AM, TAM, scia, NCTA, and STA.

Thank you, Stefan. Good Evening everyone and welcome to our meeting. I am Tammy Massengale. I am the Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis's Headquarters Coordinator for the Bay Area District 4. I am co-leading the PEL process with Stefan. In our first module, we will focus our attention on the purposes and benefits of a Planning and Environmental Linkages or PEL study by first examining 'Why is Caltrans and our partners preparing a PEL for the State Route 37 corridor?

Then we will describe:

- The relationship of the State Route 37 PEL to other State Route 37 corridor studies
- The relationship of PEL to project development processes; and then
- how the PEL information and decisions, and importantly, YOUR input will be used in subsequent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental processes.

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**WHAT IS A PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES (PEL) STUDY?**

**PEL**

- Examines broad area or corridor.
- Sets the stage for focused, future projects.
- Establishes long-term transportation vision.
- Considers conceptual design, traffic analyses, and evaluation of environmental impacts.
- Solicits input from the public, elected officials, agencies, tribes.
- Establishes buy-in on vision, purpose and need, alternatives, and environmental issues.
- Enables more effective decision-making.

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MA TAM scta NVTA STB

So now, let's look at what a PEL study, and its associated process is intended to accomplish and how it integrates planning while also streamlining subsequent environmental processes for projects.

The PEL process is a voluntary, flexible, and collaborative planning process.

It examines broad transportation, environmental, community, and economic goals early in the planning process and PEL studies allow agencies to look at the big picture by examining a broad area or corridor.

PELs establish long-term transportation visions and set the stage for focused, future projects.

PEL gathers preliminary data and considers a conceptual level of design, traffic analyses, and an evaluation of environmental impacts.

PELs also solicit input and, if possible, support from the public, tribes, elected officials, resource agencies, and other stakeholders regarding agency transportation decisions.

It establishes "buy-in" from agencies and stakeholders on corridor vision, purpose and

need, range of alternatives, and consideration of key environmental issues.

The process encourages working relationships and early agency involvement which enables more effective decision-making.

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### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A PEL

- Provides an opportunity to identify concerns as well as opportunities for collaboration.
- Allows more participation in helping shape transportation solutions.
- Yields better transportation projects that serve the community's transportation needs more effectively.
- Provides agencies with tools to design better projects while avoiding and minimizing impacts on communities and natural resources.
- Helps resolve differences on key issues.
- Improved Project Delivery Timeframes.

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Now, let's look at some of the benefits of a PEL. Some of the key benefits are realized from examining environmental and community values early in transportation project planning. This includes involving agencies and others as partners in identifying both concerns as well as opportunities for collaboration.

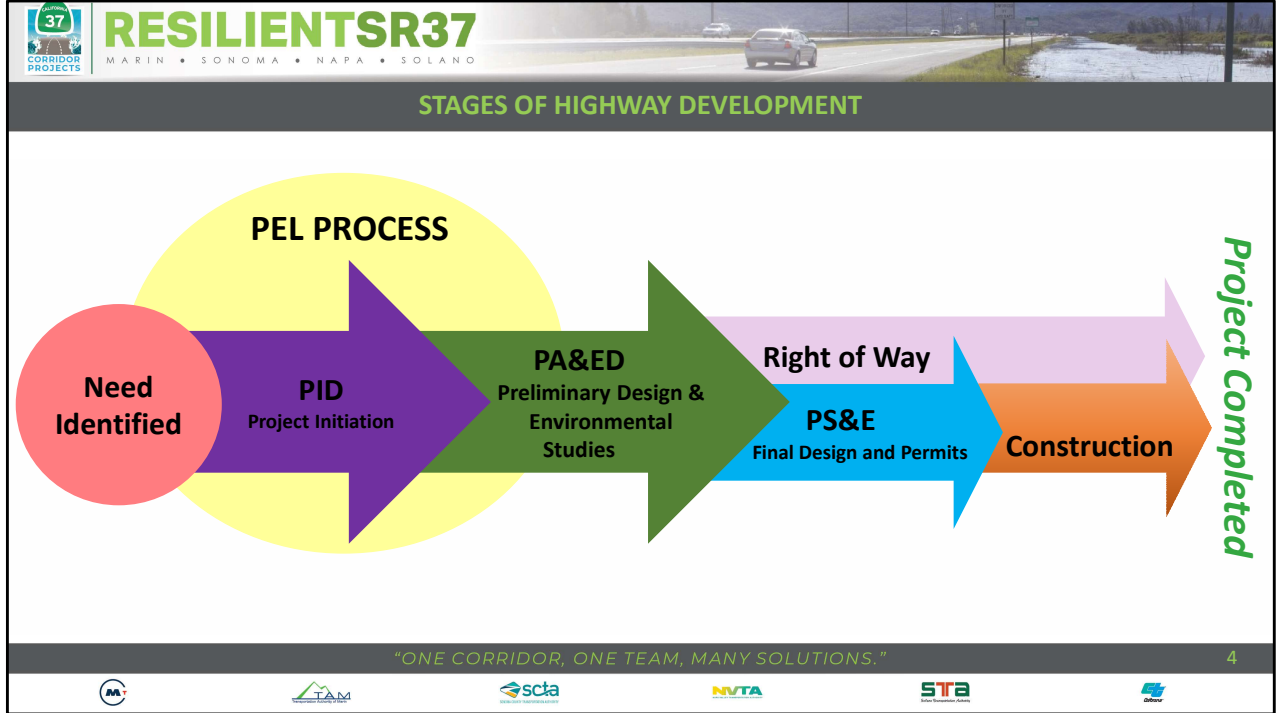
It also allows more participation in helping shape transportation solutions.

One of the direct outcomes of a PEL study is that the enhanced and early coordination with resource agencies and the public yields better transportation programs and projects that serve communities transportation needs more effectively.

Improved inter-agency relationships will also help to resolve differences on key issues moving from planning through design, and ultimately project implementation.

Another benefit of a PEL Study is improved project delivery timeframes by minimizing potential duplication of planning and other environmental compliance processes, thus creating one cohesive flow of information.

The PEL study, and its many supporting studies, provide agencies with tools to design better projects while avoiding and minimizing impacts on communities and natural resources



This is the typical Caltrans Project Delivery process.

A need (pink circle) is identified by internal and external stakeholders to improve or correct a current situation.

The first phase is the Project Initiation Document or PID phase of the project (purple arrow). During this phase, a high-level purpose and need is developed, and alternatives are identified. During this phase, the projected cost is identified along with a schedule. The outcome is a programming document that goes to the California Transportation Commission to receive approval and funding for the next phase of the project.

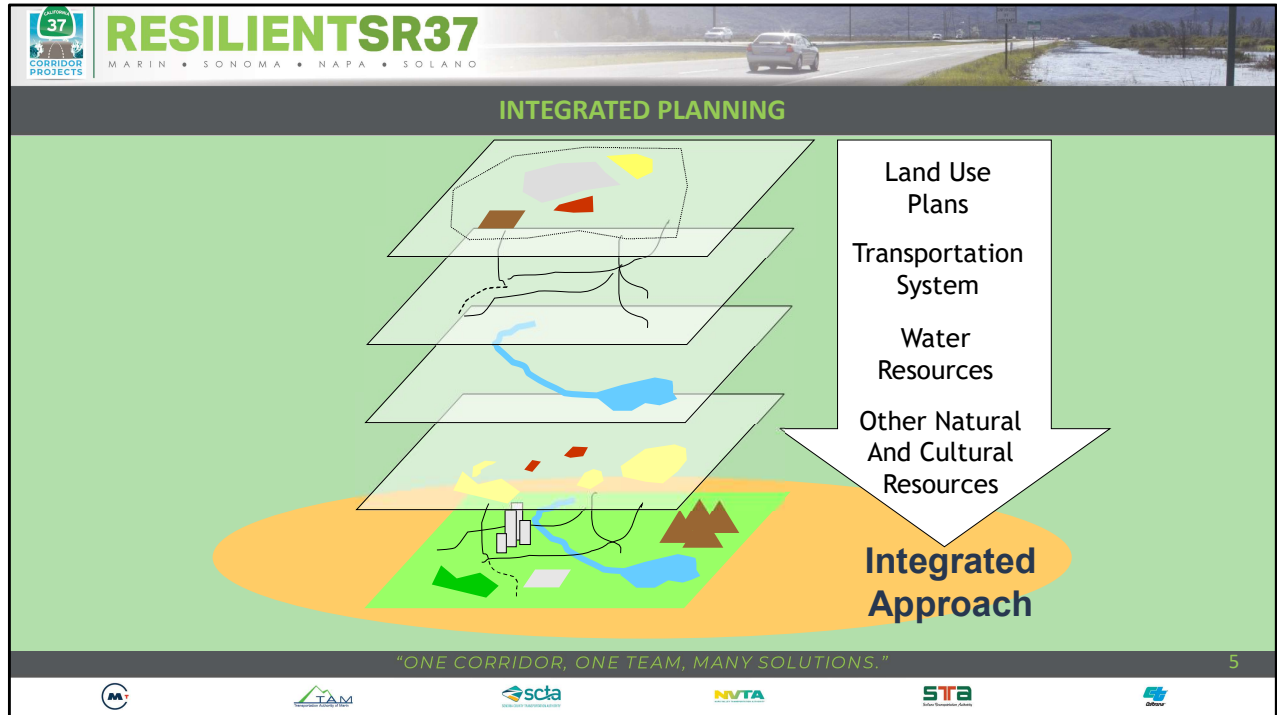
Project Approval and Environmental Document also known as PA&ED (green arrow) is when the purpose, need, and alternatives are refined. Preliminary design, up to 30%, is completed. The environmental practitioners are completing technical studies that feed into the environmental approval – environmental document or categorical exclusion/categorical exemption. During this phase Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act occurs. The final products include the environmental approval and project report.

At the end of PA&ED, two phases begin, Plans, Specifications, and Estimates also known as PS&E (blue arrow) and Right of Way (pink arrow). During PS&E, the designers are finalizing the design, writing the specifications, and completing the construction costs for the project. Concurrently, the environmental staff is working with resource agencies to obtain permits and complete mitigation, as appropriate.

During the Right of Way phase, the agents are working with property owners to obtain rights of entry, purchase right of way, and work with environmental practitioners to ensure mitigation credits and/or properties are obtained. At the end of this phase the surveyors complete monumentation for the project.

The last phase is Construction (orange arrow). This is when the project is built and opened to the traveling public.

The Planning and Environmental Linkages Process (in yellow oval) takes a lot of work that is typically segmented and brings it together. The purpose and need is finalized along and a thorough alternatives analysis is completed. These products are moved into the environmental process saving time to complete the PA&ED phase.



Another challenge is how to integrate transportation planning with the needs and priorities of municipalities, agencies, and organizations.

This Integrated Planning graphic represents the best practice concept of transportation planning as a layering of the many local components that effect the transportation system. While resource data can be integrated at any stage of the transportation process early integration is best since it is much more difficult to embrace resource agency goals and priorities at later stages. Early coordination has the potential not only to provide better protection of natural and cultural resources, but also to maximize the efficient use of scarce staff and financial resources by flagging potential problems before the narrowing of alternatives options and the completion of detailed design work. The failure to identify and address inconsistent or incompatible goals and priorities among transportation and resource agencies early typically poses a major source of conflict and delay in program/project development.

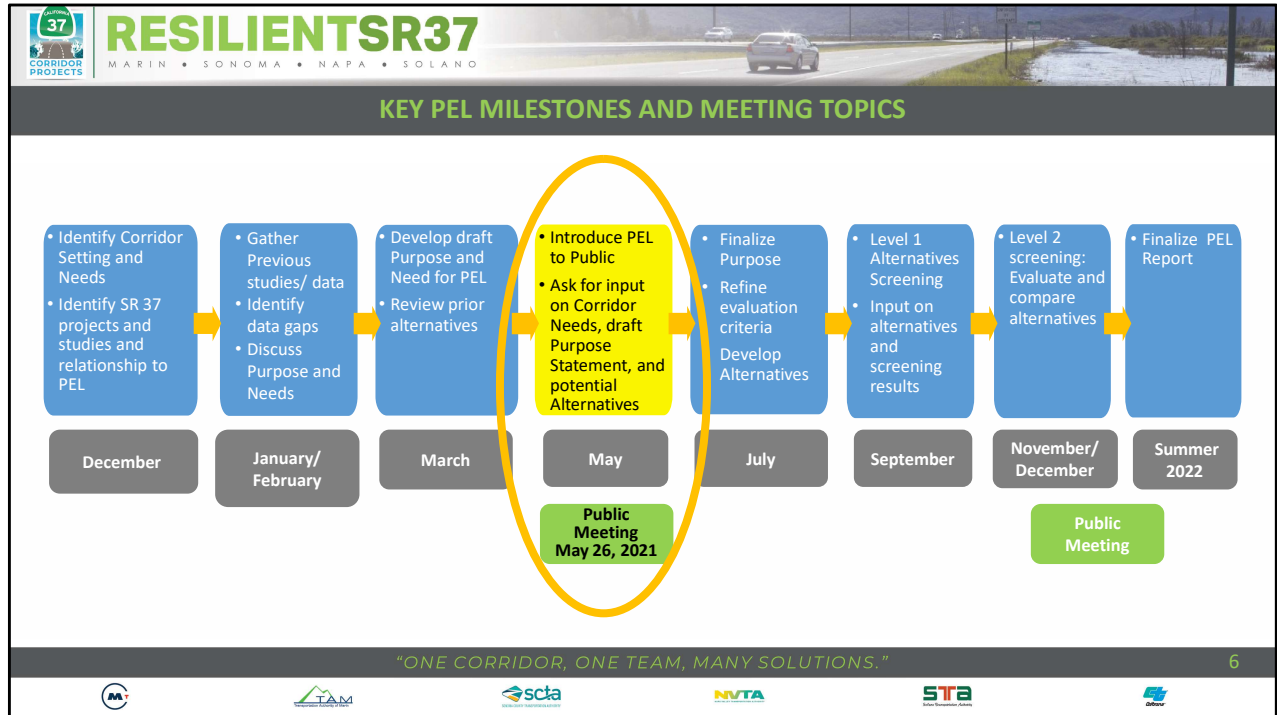
- Throughout the PEL process, we'll be using information from previous studies, including efforts that examined existing and planned bicycle, pedestrian and public access improvements.
- .
- Working through the PEL process, we'll look for possible options to improve public

access and Active Transportation opportunities.

- We will show you later how you too can access this information and help provide input to the PEL team.

So, not only we have great pre-existing information available, but new information continues to be developed and will be considered in the PEL study





In October of 2020, Caltrans District 4 initiated the State Route 37 Ultimate Corridor Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) Study from US 101 to interstate (I)-80 to identify transportation needs, consider alternatives, and develop a comprehensive and collaborative transportation vision for this critical corridor.

Eight PEL-focused meetings have occurred to date with the Resource Agency Partners (RAP) and Stakeholders Working Group (SWG).

The PEL will look to finalize it's Purpose and Need statement following the Public Meeting. The PEL will then look to do alternatives analysis the rest of 2021. The PEL is anticipated to be complete in Summer 2022.

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**POLLING QUESTION AND RESULTS**

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And now we will take a few moments and ask everyone another poll question.

**POLL QUESTION #3: Have you ever participated in the development of a highway project before?**

- Yes
- No