



**Airport Way Interchange Project  
Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)  
Meeting #9 April 1, 2009**

**SAC Members in Attendance:**

Arch Miller  
Lee Johnson  
Bill Barber  
Bryan Ableidinger  
Randall Thayer  
Paul Norum  
Pia Welch

**SAC Members Absent:**

Raye Miles  
Marcy Emerson Peters  
Steve Sieber

**Project Staff:**

John Gray (City of Portland)  
Dennis Sandstrom (Port of Portland)  
Scott King (Port of Portland)  
John Bosket (DKS)  
Leslie Howell (Howell Consulting)  
James Gregory (HDR)  
Brian Baker (HDR)  
Andy Johnson (ODOT Region 1)  
Mike Mason (ODOT Region 1)  
Christine Egan (JLA)  
Sam Beresky (JLA)

**Welcome and Introductions – Christine Egan (JLA)**

Christine welcomed the group, reviewed the meeting agenda and outlined meeting goals:

- Updated project timeline: 9<sup>th</sup> SAC meeting (of 10), review findings from quantitative evaluation
- Everyone reintroduced themselves due to the long break since the last SAC meeting
- Reviewed meeting Agenda

**Discussion and Q & A regarding Modified Approach (Andy Johnson and Scott King)**

Scott King from the Port of Portland reviewed the background of the project. ODOT and the Port of Portland signed a cooperative agreement for an Environmental Assessment. The project would ensure that in the future, traffic will not be worse at the Airport Way Interchange than it currently is. The project was not intended to alleviate the region's larger transportation problems, rather only to mitigate any extra traffic due to development at CascadeStation.

Andy Johnson from ODOT reviewed the project process to date, including the constraints:

- A list of 65 alternatives was boiled down to 13
- The preferred alternative will need to be completed by 2014
- Review of funding sources recognized a maximum of \$30 million available
  - 3 of the 13 alternatives will cost less than \$30 million to design and build
- Recognized a broader look, the 2014 timeline was short term but that a long term solution was also needed:
  - Andy Johnson submitted a proposal for the next Regional Transportation Plan to analyze regional corridor needs, including the 1-205 corridor and an additional Columbia River crossing
- Currently the project is not eligible for federal stimulus dollars because it will not be "shovel-ready" within a year
  - The Port and ODOT have submitted a funding proposal for \$13 million to Oregon's congressional delegation for the next round of funding

## **Findings from Level 2 Quantitative Evaluation Process (Brian Baker, James Gregory, John Bosket)**

Brian Baker summarized the selection process from SAC Meeting #8 and reviewed the alternatives evaluated: Minor Improvement Alternative (MI), Free Right Turn to I-205 northbound (1) and Free Right Turn with ramp meters (1b) and a No Build option. In addition, the project team conducted a fatal flaw analysis for Alternatives #2 (Divergent Diamond Interchange) and #3 (Modified Continuous Flow Interchange). The team concluded that both had fatal flaws in that they would create the same problems for the SB I-205 on-ramp that they would fix for the NB I-205 on-ramp. Brian Baker highlighted the updates to all three alternatives, including the completion of a missing segment of sidewalk on the north side of Airport Way from Glenn Widing Drive to the pedestrian and bike trail along I-205.

Andy Johnson noted that Alternatives MI, 1 and 1b were flexible enough to accommodate future alternatives or improvements to the interchange or I-205, minimizing any “throwaway” construction.

*During the presentation of the alternatives, SAC members provided comments and concerns regarding the proposed alternatives:*

Arch Miller and Randall Thayer expressed concern about the difficulty of traffic being able to get up to speed on the grade in 1 and 1b. Currently large trucks have difficulties shifting gears and reaching maximum speed on the existing ramp due to stop-and-go traffic and the notorious “hump.” This often causes traffic to back-up behind slower moving vehicles and faster drivers to weave dangerously around the trucks. SAC members were concerned that the meters would exacerbate this already existing problem by requiring trucks to come to a complete stop.

Bryan Ableidinger inquired about need to acquire right of way / property for 1 and 1b. The project team responded that property would need to be acquired but most likely no buildings.

Four SAC members expressed concern regarding cost, need, demand for, and safety of the proposed sidewalk on the north side of Airport Way (east of I-205) in all three alternatives.

The project team responded:

- Currently there is no sidewalk but there is evidence pedestrians (a trail through the mud) are using the area to access the I-205 bike/ped regional trail and the trail along Marine Drive
- Proposed sidewalk will improve pedestrian safety by linking to existing ped/bike facilities and discouraging illegal crossings of the on-ramp
- Both the City of Portland and ODOT have policies that require all transportation projects to be multi-modal
- It is difficult to analyze demand for pedestrian facilities as it is not the same as analyzing traffic demand

A few SAC members suggested connecting the sidewalk through the property to the northeast of the intersection to the bike/ped I-205 trail rather than along Airport Way

The project team responded:

- Higher cost to acquire right-of-way (ROW) through commercial property than along the shoulder of Airport Way

- Pedestrians usually follow the existing transportation system; access through a commercial property would be counter-intuitive for pedestrians.

SAC members asked about the cost differences between alternatives 1 and 1b. Brian Baker reviewed the funding constraints of \$30 million; all three alternatives (MI, 1 and 1b) are within a \$12 to \$15 million range in 2013 dollars. The team was confident that each alternative could be completed for less than \$15 million.

Arch Miller asked if the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has approved re-striping across the Glenn Jackson Bridge to add another travel lane. Andy Johnson responded that FHWA did not approve due to their concern that there would not be enough shoulder for a breakdown or emergency vehicles on the bridge, and the potential to negatively affect traffic flow on I-205. ODOT and FHWA did approve an extended lane for the northbound on-ramp.

Randall Thayer asked if the team could widen Airport Way and add a middle lane to ease the left turn from eastbound Airport Way accessing I-205 northbound. Bryan Ableidinger asked about the feasibility of creating a traffic barrier to prevent drivers in center lane (westbound on Airport Way) from turning in front of right lane traffic for NB ramp.

Lee Johnson asked if the ramp meters on northbound ramp could be moved further north to provide additional storage and move more cars off of Airport Way. John Bosket responded that the team is refining the designs and the quest is to find the perfect spot that allows for the maximum queue storage but also enough space north of the meters to allow for traffic to get up to speed while merging onto I-205. The team is also looking at “intelligent metering” to adapt to real-time traffic demand.

John Bosket from DKS reviewed the three project traffic constraints:

1. Airport Way/I-205 NB intersection has nearly reached capacity
2. The I-205 NB on-ramp from Airport Way is over capacity
3. Near-capacity conditions on I-205 NB

He reviewed project Purpose and Need Statement: To improve transportation mobility for vehicles moving from Airport Way to I-205 northbound. He discussed how the three alternatives would impact current traffic volumes and levels of improvement for the intersection and northbound on-ramp. Due to current traffic volumes, the alternatives will not alleviate congestion during the evening peak period. Ultimately, the demand will be more than the on-ramp can manage during the peak period, so the project becomes a matter of managing the queue. The three alternatives will also fit well with potential future I-205 improvements. John also noted that there was no change to peak period demand at this interchange if the Columbia River Crossing and/or tolling on I-205 were instituted in the future.

James Gregory from HDR explained that the Project Team measured the three alternatives through the Goals/Objectives evaluation criteria. Of 44 evaluation criteria, results from 39 criteria remained the same. The three alternatives performed differently for five criteria:

- Lane utilization (1.4.E3)
- Transit signal priority (3.3.E3)
- Design exceptions (4.3.E1)
- Off-peak improvement / 24 hour (5.3.E2)
- Cost Benefits (7.1.E1)

SAC members expressed concerns regarding eastbound drivers on Sandy Boulevard accessing I-205 NB may divert to Airport Way. It was thought that drivers would view the extra lane on Airport Way and a wider on-ramp as a preferable alternative. They were interested to know if the traffic modeling indicated this potential traffic diversion. John Bosket noted that none of the alternatives caused any changes outside of the project study area. He also explained that alternatives 1 and 1b will reduce the volume to capacity (v/c) ratio and make the facilities more efficient and reliable, and improve the shoulder periods around traffic peak hours. Based on traffic modeling and qualitative evaluation screening, the Project Team stated that Alternative 1b performed the best.

Randall Thayer asked if the Project Team could build Alternative 1b without ramp meters in the first phase, and monitor performance before investing in ramp meters.

Christine recorded the SAC's comments and concerns on a flipchart during the meeting. She will meet with the Project Team following the SAC meeting to review, consider and respond to SAC input. Prior to the SAC's next meeting on April 29, the Project Team will email the SAC a summary of the comments, Project Team response and next steps.

**Next Steps**

- ODOT and the Port of Portland are hosting an Open House at Multnomah Education Service District on April 22, 2009 - 4:30 – 7 pm.
- SAC will have its last meeting on April 29, 2-4 pm at the PDX Conference Center.
- The Project Team will schedule follow up briefings with community stakeholder groups. Christine will contact SAC members to identify the most appropriate way to present information.

**Action items**

The following materials and decisions require follow-up and/or action.

No.	Action Item	Responsible
1	Analyze other bike/ped routes, options and demand for proposed sidewalk improvement on north side of Airport Way (east of I-205)	Brian Baker
2	Analyze SR 14 at I-205 southbound at A.M. peak period	John Bosket