



**Airport Way Interchange Project  
Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)  
Meeting #1 April 1, 2008**

**SAC Members in Attendance:**

Arch Miller  
Pia Welch  
Marcy Emerson Peters  
Steve Sieber  
Randall Thayer  
Paul Norum  
Bryan Ableidinger

**SAC Members Absent:**

Lee Johnson  
Bill Barber  
Raye Miles

**Project Staff:**

Jeanne Lawson (JLA)  
Christine Egan (JLA)  
Shareen Rawlings (JLA)  
Robin McCaffrey (Port of Portland)  
Brian Baker (HDR)  
Rick Kuehn (CH2M)  
Leslie Howell (Howell Consulting)  
Andy Johnson (ODOT Region 1)  
Shannon Huggins (Port of Portland)  
Stacy Thomas (ODOT Region 1)  
Matt Freitag (ODOT Region 1)  
James Gregory (HDR)

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

Christine led a brief round of project team introductions, thanking committee members for their participation and commitment. She explained some of the unique aspects of this project, highlighting ODOT and the Port's commitment to have a viable solution in place by 2014. Christine then asked each SAC participant to introduce themselves, highlight their individual affiliations and state one question regarding the Airport Way Interchange project process. SAC questions and staff responses are outlined as part of the "Project Overview" summary in the sections below.

SAC members and affiliations:

- Pia Welch – *President, Portland Air Cargo Association; Project Engineering Specialist, FEDEX; Member, Portland Freight Committee*
- Bryan Ableidinger – *Member, Parkrose Business Association; Owner, Parkrose Hardware; Vancouver Resident*
- Arch Miller – *Former Port Commissioner, Port of Vancouver; Chairman Founder, International Air and Hospitality Academy*
- Marcy Emerson Peters – *Past Chair, Parkrose Neighborhood Association (Land Use and Community Development); Board member, Eastside Neighborhood Coalition*
- Paul Norum – *General Manager, Vanguard Car Rental USA*
- Steve Sieber – *VP, Development Management, Trammel Crow; Cascade Station Developer*

- Randall Thayer – *Executive Vice President Pollin Hotels (Sheraton, Hampton, Loft)*

Christine walked through the objectives of the meeting, highlighting the following goals:

- Build common understanding of SAC's purpose, roles and responsibilities
- Establish operating protocols
- Review project purpose, scope and schedule
- Clarify and respond to SAC questions regarding the project

Christine explained that each SAC member was given a project binder and briefly walked through the contents of the binder.

**Project Overview – *Andy Johnson (ODOT Region 1) and Robyn McCaffrey (Port of Portland)***

Andy began, thanking the group for their participation and interest in the project. He explained that the general idea of the true purpose of the project is to address current and future congestion for the movement of traffic from Airport Way to I-205 northbound. He described the history of the partnership between the Port of Portland and ODOT and described some of the main issues that the project will address:

1. Extreme delays in both directions on Airport Way going to I-205 north
2. The I-205 northbound on-ramp design that cannot handle today's peak hour traffic, much less tomorrow's

Marcy suggests an additional issue: merging vehicles from Sandy Blvd. have to cross over several lanes of traffic in order to move away from the "Exit only to the Airport" sign on Airport Way.

Andy Johnson asked the group if there were any other questions regarding the general project purpose. Steve Sieber asked how far the project team was looking forward when running traffic models (5, 10, 20 years). Andy explained that this type of project typically looks at a 20-year timeframe. Andy explained that with the 2014 timeline, it will be a challenging but interesting opportunity to address and create a viable solution to congestion issues in the area.

Robin McCaffrey with the Port of Portland briefly reviewed project history and the partnership between ODOT and the Port. She explained that in 1998, the Port completed the Airport Area Transportation Study. This study predicted a problem at the intersection of Airport Way and the northbound I-205 on-ramp. She noted that the 2000 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) also included this issue on a list of regional projects, although not on the financially constrained list. The project has since been added to the RTP Financially Constrained list and at this point, the interchange can fail on any given day.

She also explained that the Cooperative Agreement, through which ODOT and the Port are pursuing a solution to the congestion associated with the northbound movement from Airport Way to I-205, grew out of the environmental assessment associated with the Portland International Center/Cascade Station development. Through the environmental assessment process, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) agreed that the congestion at I-205 northbound and Airport Way could be addressed as a regional problem. In turn, ODOT and the Port made a commitment to the FAA to have a fix to the interchange congestion problem in place by 2014. This commitment, which involved financially contributions from the Port, the Cascade Station developer and a federal earmark, is what has allowed the project to move forward now. Following her presentation, Robin turned the discussion over to Brian Baker with HDR.

Brian reviewed the different phases of the project, highlighting major milestones.

Robin revisited the committee questions recorded earlier – providing a basic response to each with the help of other project team members. Answers and project team responses are summarized below:

- Is this a temporary fix, or part of a less temporary fix focused on addressing freight issues? (Pia Welch)
- How will the project team fit an on-ramp going eastbound without significant impacts to business and residents? (Bryan Ableidinger)  
Staff Response: The Project Team has an understanding of the problems associated with this project, but has not yet identified a solution, i.e. we don't know if an on-ramp is the best option.
- What different types of transportation solutions will play into this project – light rail, transit and busses? (Arch Miller)
- On-ramps seem to contribute to congestion. You need to look at other types of solutions to break the bottlenecks, i.e. transit options. (Marcy Emerson Peters)  
Staff Response: Robin explained that all transportation solutions associated with this project will have to include TDM and TSM measures (Transportation Demand Management and Transportation System Management), which would look at alternative modes of transportation and connectivity. Robin said that she did not to what degree this project would focus on these transportation elements.
- What immediate steps can be taken to reduce congestion, specifically when there are accidents/incidents on the roadway? (Paul Norum)
- What is the single largest hurdle for the project? (Steve Sieber)  
Staff Response: Staff explained that timing and funding are the two largest hurdles. Timing specifically in terms of what needs to be done and making sure that this solution is in place by 2014.
- Expressed hope that he would be able to offer insight into the experience of congestion. (Randall Thayer)

Arch Miller asked if passenger facility charges could be used for this facility. Robin responded that she didn't know, but explained that the FAA has an intricate system to determine what can be funded.

Bryan Ableidinger mentioned that the greatest challenge with previous improvements on Sandy Blvd. was the competing priorities of jurisdictions and agencies. He asked if the Port and ODOT were on the same page in terms of acknowledging the existing problems and working together towards a common solution. Robin explained that the process that is currently set up for this project should show this collaboration. Andy confirmed that the Port and ODOT are on the same page, and have worked closely to define the project's purpose.

Pia Welch asked how the project team was defining traffic. Andy explained that they consider traffic auto/truck traffic moving onto the on-ramp.

Jeanne Lawson noted that the project team and partnering agencies needed to be clear regarding the project problem statement, and have worked closely to focus specifically on northbound congestion. She confirmed that all agencies have competing interests, but that this group went through an extensive consensus-building process to determine the project's purpose and scope.

Christine noted that although there are no bicycle or pedestrian advocates represented on the committee, bike and ped advocates were included in stakeholder interviews and invited to participate on the committee. The Willamette Pedestrian Coalition, City Pedestrian Advisory Committee and the Bicycle Transportation Alliance declined. We did let members from all of these groups know that we would keep them updated through stakeholder group meetings.

#### **Committee Charge and Protocols – *Jeanne Lawson (JLA)***

Jeanne walked the group through the project structure and process, explaining that the overall project structure was much larger than the SAC. She explained that a final decision will ultimately be made by policy level decision makers, but that project committees will have a great influence on this decision. She described interchange area plans, noting that there are a number of decision-making bodies and walked through each of the project committees. She explained that the Policy Group was comprised of high level decision makers and representatives. The SAC's main responsibility would be to bring different interests together to build consensus and work towards a solution. The PDT (Project Development Team) ensures that recommendations from the SAC are technically and policy sound before the team forward's recommendations to decision makers. Jeanne emphasized the role of the public in this process, explaining that public input would be critical throughout the project process. Jeanne also referred to the Project Management Team, and pointed out all of these members were represented by the staff present at the SAC meeting.

Jeanne described the recommendation process with the SAC reporting to the PDT, which is responsible for reviewing those recommendations on a technical and policy level, then forwarding them onto the Policy Group with comments. One of the key responsibilities of SAC members is to ensure that their constituents are informed about the project. Randall Thayer asked if the SAC would be able to learn who sits on the other committees. Jeanne explained that the agencies represented are: ODOT, Port of Portland – Policy and Land use, City of Portland, Federal Highway Administration, Washington Department of Transportation.

Arch Miller suggested that a glossary be included in the SAC binder that would outline project definitions and abbreviations.

Jeanne then turned to a discussion of committee protocols and responsibilities, walking through draft protocols and the Committee's charge:

- Advise project staff and PDT on community concerns and issues, *and through the PDT*, the Policy Group.
- Serve as a forum to identify and build consensus on alternatives that reflect a broad range of needs and interests.
- Serve as liaisons to constituents and represent the community as a whole.
- Strive to reach consensus on major recommendations.

Jeanne referred to a handout outlining proposed committee protocols. The first set of protocols determined how a group will work together in a meeting. These protocols outlined general ground rules and meeting protocols, including a protocol regarding alternates and/or proxies. The SAC moved into a brief discussion of the pros and cons of alternatives, and agreed unanimously not to allow alternates, and instead to accommodate call-ins and the electronic sharing of perspectives and recommendations prior to meetings. Project Development Team members at the meeting confirmed that they would work with the SAC to debrief members and send out meeting materials to members who were unable to attend a meeting.

The group asked that their private contact information not be included with project materials and website.

The committee preferenced a two-thirds ratio for decision making if a clear consensus could not be reached.

The committee discussed protocols relating to public accessibility. Jeanne explained that the SAC's charge is to ensure a transparent and accessible public process. The committee decided that they would include a scheduled time for public comment at each group meeting, but also agreed to remain flexible in terms of scheduling this time at the beginning or end of the meeting.

The committee unanimously moved to accept the draft communication protocols, including guidelines for media communications.

### **Public Comments**

One member of the public attended the meeting and asked to speak.

Jim Howell: A retired architect and transportation planner, currently serving as Director for the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA). He asked if project team had offered to provide free TriMet tickets to SAC members. He stated that the time of congestion suggests that the problem is really created by commuter travel. He outlined two ways to solve the problem: 1) Increasing capacity, which is more of an engineering solution, and 2) Reducing travel demand. He stated that it is not useful to use the carrot or the stick approach when attempting to reduce travel demand. As a proponent of the carrot approach, which centers on providing better public transportation choices to people, he emphasized how this project created a great opportunity to show how transit can work. The key will be in frequency and connectivity, and urged the group to allow this type of operational solution to take priority in this project.

### **Next Steps – *Christine Egan (JLA)***

Christine briefly reviewed the agenda for the April 16 SAC meeting #2, highlighting an issues workshop where committee members would help shape evaluation criteria for reviewing proposed options.

She asked the committee to decide on a meeting time that would work best for the majority of members. The group decided to meet Wednesdays, 2 - 4 p.m. following the April 16 meeting. All meetings will be hosted at the Portland International Airport Conference Center