

Oregon Commercial Truck Parking Study

TAC Meeting #3, Held by Zoom

April 14, 2020, 1-4 p.m.

Meeting Summary

TAC Member Attendees

- Waylon Buchan, Oregon State Police (OSP)
- Tom Bouillion, Port of Portland
- Kristin Gomez, Schneider National
- Mark Gibson, Siskiyou Transportation
- Michael Quilty, RVMPO
- Brad Aimone, Central Oregon Trucking Company
- Rick Kokel, May Trucking Co
- Tom Faricy, Jubitz Truck Stop
- Mike Matousek, Owner-Operators Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA)
- Nick Fortey, FHWA
- Jana Jarvis, Oregon Trucking Association
- Gordon Oldham, Walmart
- Kacie Skeen, Pilot/Flying J
- Tiffany Wlazlowski National Association of Truck Stop Operators (NATSO)

Friends of the Committee and Staff

- Robin Beheim, ODOT Maintenance District 12
- Erik Havig, ODOT Freight Planning
- Audrey Lawson, ODOT MCTD
- Robin Marshburn, ODOT Freight Planning
- Sunshine Mancuso, ODOT Planning
- Bridget Wieghart, WSP
- Sebastian Guerrero, WSP
- Shashank Pulikanti, WSP

Note: The slides which covered the main presentation points in the meeting are attached. Points covered by slides are not repeated elsewhere in the meeting summary.

Welcome and Introductions

Erik Havig thanked the group for their willingness to participate remotely due to COVID-19. Robin explained some logistics related to Zoom. He encouraged the group to post their questions or comments using the chat function throughout the meeting.

Study Status

Robin Marshburn reviewed the recent deliverables and timeline of the study. This is the last TAC meeting. He underscored the importance of getting input on the recommendations from this group before finalizing this technical memo and developing the final report.

Summary of Needs

Bridget Wieghart presented slides 3-16. She explained the updated demand maps. They had been updated since the last TAC to show intersections between segments where a truck parking facility could have fallen into either segment but had been assigned to one. If the segments fell into different categories, the area immediately around the junction had been colored to reflect the access to truck parking in the transition zone.

Bridget then reviewed the detailed needs analysis (see PPT slides, attached). She noted that more details were in the task 9 memo. Nick Fortey asked whether in areas with undesignated parking this could be resolved through disseminating information. Bridget explained that we learned through the survey and demand analysis, that there are a variety of reasons that truck drivers park in undesignated parking. It could relate to a lack of capacity, but often is tied more to other factors such as convenience, concern about accidents in crowded truck parking lots or individual preferences.

Jana Jarvis agreed that information was important. She noted that the COVID crisis has created issues when demand was high. There was confusion when and where truck drivers could stop. She pointed that there was an opportunity for reservation systems to provide truck drivers with assurance that a parking space would be available. Bridget agreed and noted that there was a lot of discussion about this at the previous meeting. She noted that reservations were not that common now. Traditionally, most truck stops provided parking for free in exchange for purchase of fuel and food. Tom Faricy said that Jubitz has a small number (18) spaces for paid reserve parking now but might expand in the future.

Identification and Prioritization of Solutions

Shashank Pulikanti presented slides 17-29. There was a discussion about the potential to expand the availability of parking through managing public spaces, including undesignated parking areas. Various measures including design of parking spaces, and night time patrols were mentioned. Waylon Buchan said that cameras can be used as a security device. The group discussed the use of cameras both for detection of available spaces and as a low-cost security measure. Even if security footage can't be tracked real-time, the cameras can act as a deterrent to crime.

Robin said he had thought that most independent truck drivers were not willing to pay for reservations. He asked whether OOIDA had any comments as to their member's preferences in this regard.

Jana said that it was important to let the market drive solutions with the private sector. She suggested that the state could look into these solutions for the rest areas that it maintains. Robin said he would follow up with Jim Denno.

Tiffany W. asked about slide 20. In talking about capacity expansion through public-private partnerships, it referenced cost sharing for construction of public parking areas with private partners. This is not always possible on public areas. Shashank Pulikanti clarified that this was on private parking areas.

Jana Jarvis said that during the COVID crisis there was a proposed relaxation of the enforcement of federal highways prohibition against commercial uses on publicly funded interstates. This was only a temporary measure to allow food trucks to serve public rest areas during COVID.

Robin asked the group for more feedback on the recommendations. Did they think the recommendations were generally on target. Was anything missing?

Mark Gibson noted that in some cases this is a pure capacity issue. He supported the development of bare bones types of lots, like Truck Depot, as lack of capacity is a key area of concern. He said that the recommendations were generally in the right direction. Tom Faricy concurred that the recommendations were on target. He explained that one of the big problems is truck drivers knowing that they have a spot when they get there. He said they need more land but that is a difficult thing. Tough when the demand is close into the City. He suggested that there were more opportunities further out towards Gresham. Disseminating information is important so he supported trucking parking phone applications. Not many of the truck stops report their availability through Park My Truck. Trucker Path is crowd sources and less reliable.

Recommended Actions

Bridget reviewed the recommendations matrix to the group. She explained the purpose and lay out and walked through the details of primary needs and solutions.

Erik asked about truck parking in the southern portion of the state along I-5. He wondered whether the group knows why there was so much undesignated parking when there is capacity at nearby truck stops. Was it because amenities, design or location? Mark Gibson said he lived in that area. He doesn't know that the issue is. He speculated that drivers might hit their required break time coming up from the Bay area. It's also really accessible with lots of room. Robin explained that truck drivers have reported that it is convenient to stop at Ashland Hill park at the top of a long incline and check their brakes before descending.

Robin noted that Santiam rest area is not always full but the parking spots are pretty tight. Trucks often park along the long access road, which is tree lined. He sees trucks parked there even when some spots were available in the rest area.

There was a discussion about the capacity needs for I-84 near Portland and the fact that there is a lot of undesignated parking further east. Jana thought predictability would be helpful on the congestion front. A reservation system would be useful. Many truck drivers spend over an hour looking or park earlier to ensure they get a spot. This hurts efficiency. Many trucks try to stay east of the City.

Tom Faricy concurred. He said that the far east side TA or Loves near Troutdale would benefit if truck drivers had more information or certainty. He said some truck drivers head east of Portland to try to pre-position themselves further out in the Gorge.

Robin said that the ODOT maintenance district noted the seasonal weather problem on portions of I-84. Bridget said that the needs analysis noted what the problem was where the survey or TAC had indicated. However, in some cases a site-specific survey would be helpful in further pinpointing the issue.

Gordon Oldham explained that, for Walmart, the wind was a huge problem in the Gorge. It is unpredictable and after a while the truck drivers get tired of fighting it and pull over. This is especially a problem with empties. They use the Wood Village truck stop. In Hood River the wind is terrible and they serve the Rufus Walmart. 85% of the time it is empty. They might shut down early due to HOS rules. The Memaloose parking area can only fit 10 trucks going in westbound direction.

Bridget thanked him for his input and asked if he had other comments on this or previous documents. He said that overall the recommendations looked reasonable.

Robin asked whether there were other comments. Bridget noted that the documents were all on the website and encouraged the committee to provide any additional comments within one week.

Next Steps

Robin described the next steps (see PPT). He noted that the final memo will also include a section of funding opportunities.

Jana asked who the final report would go to. Robin noted that we had gone to OFAC previously but would take the final report to their next meeting and get input from them. Or, if timing doesn't work out, we would email it.

Jana asked who the primary audience was. Erik confirmed that it is OFAC. He said staff wants to work with OFAC to implement the study and weigh in on the funding opportunities. Possibly the OTC, if there is a high competition of funding. Erik said we would also work with Galen McGill to coordinate on ITS and information systems. Robin said that ODOT hoped to develop better relationships with maintenance districts regarding undesignated parking. Their knowledge will be important in determining whether to enforce or improved undesignated parking. After completion of this study, ODOT will develop an implementation plan to carry out the recommendations.