



Sub Group 2 Meeting, Access Management Standards

Access Management Committee

Transportation Building

355 Capitol Street NE, Room 119

Salem, OR 97301

3:00 – 4:30 PM, July 7, 2010

FINAL

Working Facilitator: Del Huntington.

Participants: Michael Rock, Bob Bryant, Shawn Stephens, Mark Whitlow, Rick Nys, Monte Grove, Jim Hanks, and Victor Dodier.

Meeting Purpose

Develop expectations and desired outcomes for reaching consensus on “access management standards that conform to reality” on state highways.

Discussion

Michael Rock – Michael proposed that there may be an opportunity to develop specific AM standards that fit a specific corridor.

Mark Whitlow – Mark would like to re-tool the system so that AM standards can be applied without the need for 90% of the applications to result in the need for a deviation from the spacing standards. Public street spacing is also a concern as the present standards do not fit reality, i.e., Portland has street spacing on a 200’ grid which is less than any of the acceptable street spacing allowed in the ODOT AM rules. AM spacing standards in Oregon are very conservative and can be reduced without compromising safety and operations.

Interchange Area Management Plans (IAMP) may be a good idea though the required spacing does not reflect reality within the UGBs. The spacing standards need to be re-evaluated.

Shawn Stephens – Shawn would like to see the AM spacing standards revised and lowered while not degrading safety.

Jim Hanks – There needs to be recognition that access must be context sensitive. State highways also serve as the Main Street through most Oregon cities. Downtowns are built on a grid street system, with public street spacing of 200 to 400 feet. The ODOT spacing

standard on a Statewide Level of Importance (LOI) highway is 750 feet; therefore every driveway on the system requires a deviation and some degree of analysis to justify the need for the access. This usually costs the developer a minimum of \$7,000 - \$8,000 and the decision on whether or not the access will be approved is 50/50. AM spacing standards should allow for development to occur. Highways with lower speeds could have much closer spacing than presently acknowledged in the AM spacing standards. One-way streets could have even closer driveway spacing as they operate as a right-in/right-out only or left-in, left-out only. Del confirmed that the initial work conducted by OSU in developing the AM spacing standards acknowledged that where driveways function as a right-in/right-out only or left-in, left-out only, the spacing could be 50% of the driveway spacing standards. Unfortunately this text was not included in the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) and therefore is not reflected in the current standards.

Monte Grove – Monte recommends that we review the driveway applications and identify the deviation that was required and the spacing between driveways. The AM spacing standards should reflect what has been permitted. He also believes that the AM spacing standards should reflect the local city standards, especially on District and Regional highways within the UGB. There must be a better balance and increased flexibility when considering access to statewide highways and expressways. The balance should consider access, mobility and safety.

There may be some state highways where you do not require any spacing standard. One size does not fit all and Monte does not want standards that force the agency into a box.

Rick Nys – Rick agrees that there are too many deviations when the state processes driveway applications. Regardless of the outcome of this process and if the AM spacing standards are reduced, some people will not be satisfied with the outcome. Spacing standards should be based on the context of the roadway environment. Rick expressed a concern if local jurisdictions take over permitting activities on state highways as they often have different standards such as type and use of medians, shy distance, etc.

Bob Bryant – Bob echoed Monte’s comments. There are state highways within UGBs that serve a local function and Bob would like to see ODOT getting out of the main street business. Bob would like local jurisdictions to take over permitting activities for driveways for local interest state highways by applying the local ordinances. In exchange, maintain a high level of mobility on critical routes in the UGB.

Del Huntington – The AM spacing standards treat all driveways as equal, when in reality, this is far from the truth. The driveway volume and type of traffic using the driveway should be considered. I.e., a driveway serving a single family residence will typically experience five exiting and five entering trips each day. A large commercial development may experience 6,000 exiting and 6,000 entering trips each day. It doesn’t make sense that the AM spacing standard is the same for either driveway.

Jim Hanks – Jim agrees with all of the concepts that have been proposed, though in the event that the concepts and revisions cannot be realized, he would like to see an honest

appeals process when applicants are denied. Jim considers that present appeals process as a kangaroo court and clients are not willing or interested in going through an expensive and time-consuming process that will merely support the earlier ODOT decision.

Additional Discussion

As SB 1024 directs ODOT to develop less stringent AM standards on highways with less than 5,000 ADT, what happens if all of the spacing standards on the entire system are reduced? Will ODOT be required to develop a lower set of standards for highways with less than 5,000 ADT? Mark commented that we are engaged on a collaborative process and modifying the AM standards and improving the process is more critical than a further reduction of standards on highway with less than 5,000 ADT.

It was acknowledged that a lot of the potential recommendations by the sub-group would require revisions to the OHP, a document that has been approved by the OTC. Any proposed revision would require their prior approval for a plan amendment and would require a review process for cities, counties and other travel modes.

Bob commented that we need to make sure that the AM spacing standards allow for economic development while ensuring that the standards are appropriate for the long-term interests of the state. Are revised AM standards a permanent or temporary change? If temporary, the state may be required to go back and “fix” the roadway system.

Others commented that there is an acknowledgement that to achieve higher density and in-fill within the urban areas consistent with state planning goals, congestion on the roadways will increase.

In the event that accesses to state highway within the UGB are permitted by local jurisdictions, there must be an acknowledgement that the local decisions may lead to increased congestion, however, ODOT cannot be held responsible to come back and provide roadway improvements.

If the ODOT AM standards are modified, it will require revisions to many existing internal manuals and guidelines to ensure consistency.

In order to determine the number of deviations that are required as a means of approving an approach application, data can be pulled from the CHAMPS permitting data base. The Region Access Management Engineers may also be able to answer specific questions related to the types and frequency of deviation requests that they process.

Action Items

Bob will direct staff to pull data on various highways inside and outside of UGBs from CHAMPS. The data should also reveal if the property owner had any other means of access to the property, or if highway access was the only available access to serve the site.

Monte Grove will provide an update of the sub-group issues at the next AM Committee meeting on July 12th.

Del will forward the participants with a link to an ODOT .FTP site where Harold Lasley has uploaded traffic flow maps to illustrate state highways with less than 5,000 ADT. The maps will be available through July 12th.

Del will send participants a list of potential dates to consider for the second sub-group meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM