



Hamilton Area Transportation Plan 2009 Update

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Notes June 10, 2009 – Meeting Number 2

Introduction

The second Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for the Hamilton Area Transportation Plan (2009 Update) project was held on Wednesday, June 10, 2009, from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm at City Hall. The purpose of the meeting was to continue TAC involvement on the project, and to more specifically discuss the draft level of service and draft socioeconomic technical memorandums. The following TAC members were present for this second meeting:

- Keith Smith (City of Hamilton)
- John Lavey (Ravalli County)
- Sheila Ludlow (Montana Department of Transportation – Helena)
- Ron Uemura (RAM Engineering)

Dave Ohnstad, Ravalli County Road and Bridge Department, and Shane Stack, Montana Department of Transportation (Missoula), were unable to attend due to a previously scheduled commitment. The meeting was facilitated by CDM's project manager, Jeff Key.

Discussion Items

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the eighteen (18) intersections identified for detailed study as part of this planning effort. Jeff presented operational findings of the intersections as they correlate to "levels of service". This is generally viewed as a quantitative analysis. After Jeff's discussion, the group talked about the intersections from a qualitative perspective – i.e. what are individual's impression and experience of the intersections as a driver. The hope was to identify issues and/or concerns that the "numbers" can't identify. The results of this discussion are presented below:

US-93 & Fairgrounds Road/Adirondac Avenue

- Rushing east/west vehicles trying to get through intersection – some running on yellows and reds (mostly).
- Near misses when eastbound left turns go in front of thru westbound traffic.
- General congestion on east/west legs – traffic backs up.

- Access management issues on Fairgrounds Road with restaurant parking and ACE parking/supply area.
- Overall area could use better delineation.
- Overall area could benefit from access/approach management.

US-93 & Pine Street

- Lots of access points adjacent to intersection - gas station, paint store, realty office.
- Difficult to leave paint store if backup on Pine Street.
- Off of Pine Street, when a driver turns into the gas station while someone is turning westbound off of US 9 – potential conflict.
- Realty office o US 93 - two access points to parking lot very close to intersection (difficult to see when leaving parking lot).
- If there is traffic backed up on US 93 (southbound), people drive through gas station lot to get Pine Street (westbound).
- Dedicated right-turn lane on Pine.

US-93 & Main Street/Marcus Street

- Sight distance compromised due to “S-curve” on east leg of intersection.
- Large tree affects sight distance for eastbound left turning vehicles onto US Highway 93.
- US Highway 93 southbound left turns have to swing very wide to continue eastbound due to the three westbound lanes on the east leg.
- Lots of continuous driveways and accesses in the area – Safeway access can cause some issues.
- At times trucks to Safeway back out into US Highway 93.

US-93 & Ravalli Street

- Rocky Mountain Laboratories paid in to fund this signal.
- Several access points around intersection – gas station and restaurant.
- There are pedestrian crossing issues with children crossing US 93 due to location of elementary school.

US-93 & Golf Course Road/Hope Avenue

- Vehicles travel through gas station access to avoid signal.
- Private drive approaches.

US-93 & Riverside Cutoff

- Traffic speeds pick up heading north out of town.
- A lot of cars use middle turn lane to make quick turn and merge with traffic on 93.
- Construction site on Riverside Cutoff - large trucks entering with gravel
- Will become an important intersection in the future due to Area 3 planning.

Old Corvallis Road/Mill Street & Fairgrounds Road

- Traffic from the east seems to be moving very fast - cars heading towards downtown.
- Cars from south turn right before the stop sign - there is a large open area.
- Traffic backup on Fairgrounds Road (waiting for US-93 signal).
- The fair is always a big event with lots of congestion.
- Maybe time to think about a new fairgrounds entrance?
- Contact Erik Garberg (Allied Engineering-Bozeman).

Freeze Lane & Fairgrounds Road

- Two school entrances on west Fairgrounds Road most commonly used for school entrance.
- School entrance on south Freeze used for school traffic - Freeze/Fairgrounds doesn't see much "school" traffic.
- Maximum of 3 cars observed backed up on Freeze Lane.

Eastside Highway & Fairgrounds Road

- Overall travel speeds on Eastside Highway – interest in transitioning speeds?
- Sight distance issues on south leg of Eastside Highway.
- PM hour seven (7) cars observed backed up on eastbound leg (Fairgrounds Road).
- No defined shoulders on Fairgrounds Road.
- Look at southbound right turn lane on Eastside Highway / eastbound left turn lane on Fairgrounds Road, as a short-term improvement?

Kurtz Lane & Eastside Highway

- **New exhibit/aerial handed out at meeting – with correct photo.**
- Left turn lane on southbound Kurtz Lane not used much.
- Notice school buses and other school related traffic at this location.
- South Kurtz Lane & North Kurtz lane slightly offset in alignment.
- PM hour sees traffic backed up on south Kurtz Lane.
- When on south Kurtz Lane, difficult to see west on Marcus Street due to adjacent residence fence and tree (i.e. sight distance obstruction).

Eastside Highway & Black Lane/Bass Lane

- Travel speeds on Eastside Highway.
- Sight distance concerns on both north and south legs of Eastside Highway—difficult to see oncoming traffic at high speeds.
- Offset geometrics on Black Lane and Bass Lane - Bass lane is slightly north of Black Lane.
- New development area east - traffic generation area (several construction vehicles/equipment)
- Eastbound Black Lane has large gravel right turn area.

2nd Street & Main Street

- Diagonal street parking on all legs.

- Heavy pedestrian and bicycle usage.
- Observed sight-impaired individuals using the intersection crosswalks. Also observed motorized wheelchair using pedestrian crossings.
- Right on red - vehicles inch out to see around buildings on corners (sight distance concerns).

3rd Street & Main Street

- Heavy pedestrian and bicycle usage (mostly in PM).
- Diagonal street parking.
- Vehicles inch out into crosswalks and into intersection because of site distance - difficult to see around buildings on corners.
- Traffic backs up through intersection due to timing on 2nd and Main Street signal.
- Occasionally see “rolling stops” at the intersection - near misses when vehicles turn really close to one another.

4th Street & Main Street

- Heavy pedestrian.
- Diagonal street parking.
- Vehicles inch out into crosswalks and into intersection because of site distance - difficult to see around buildings on corners.
- Traffic backs up through intersection due to timing on 2nd and Main Street signal.
- Occasionally see “rolling stops” at the intersection - near misses when vehicles turn really close to one another. This is especially true for vehicles travelling from the east.

Big Corral Road & Golf Course Road

- No turn lanes.
- Large intersection.

Kurtz Lane & Golf Course Road

- Seems like Grantsdale Road picks up quite a bit of traffic between Kurtz Lane and Big Corral Road.
- Grantsdale Road seems to have more backup traffic than Kurtz Lane.
- Large amount of school buses and school related traffic.
- Some pedestrians and bicyclists.

Eastside Highway & Tammany Lane

- Overall vehicle speeds.
- Notice cars tailgating turning vehicles resulting in several near misses.
- Sight distance concerns around the downhill curve.
- Some cars slow down going uphill and people behind pull right up on them.
- U-turn in front of Tammany and private residence - people turn in thinking it is Tammany Lane.

Eastside Highway & Airport Road

- Overall vehicle speeds.
- Notice cars tailgating turning vehicles resulting in several near misses.
- Several cars tailgate turning vehicles.
- General traffic congestion – cars heading north and south trying to turn on Airport Road.
- Vehicles go around turning cars in both directions (pass in other lane).

Other Discussion Items

- Jeff reviewed the draft socioeconomic technical memorandum and informed the TAC the process used to derive the dwelling unit forecasts. Questions were raised as to how infill was handled within the existing City limit boundary. Jeff stated that he would check with the City's Growth Policy consultant to confirm that a basic amount of infill was established within the City limits. The intent is to assign some dwelling units as infill, however it doesn't appear this information is currently shown on the draft "growth" graphics. Specific areas to look at for confirmation include the areas just north of Geneva Avenue, and also in and around the airport.
- Jeff pointed out that the existing City limits shown on the draft graphics will be modified to reflect recent annexations over the past few years. Jeff has requested this information in GIS format from HDR Engineering.
- There was concern expressed regarding overall speed issues on Eastside Highway, and also how to better transition speeds.

Conclusion & Action Items

The meeting concluded with a brief discussion of logistics and scheduling of the next meeting. **The next meeting of the TAC (meeting number 3) is scheduled for Monday, August 10th, 2009 from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.** The location is to-be-determined.

Also, the first public informational meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 8, at City Hall. Advertisements will be forthcoming.