



GLENN HIGHWAY & HILAND ROAD INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS STAKEHOLDER MEETING ALASKA TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

February 11, 2025, 9-10 a.m.

DOWL Anchorage Office and virtually via Microsoft Teams

Project Team Attendees

Galen Jones, P.E., Project Manager, Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Kelly Kilpatrick, P.E., Project Manager, DOWL

Sam Tyler, P.E., Project Engineer, DOWL

Austin Zavala, P.E., Transportation Engineer, DOWL

Morgan McCammon, Public Involvement, DOWL

Alaska Trucking Association Representatives

Travis Roth, Anchorage Terminal Manager, Sourdough Express

Randy Efird, Terminal Manager, Weaver Bros., Inc.

Samantha Brown, Manager of Health and Safety Compliance, United Freight and Transport

Meeting Summary

Members of the project team held a stakeholder meeting with representatives of Alaska Trucking Association (ATA) at the DOWL Anchorage Office and via Teams on Wednesday, February 12, 2025, from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

The meeting began with introductions, description of the project area, and project purpose and need by Galen Jones, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) Project Manager. Galen mentioned project status and the alternatives to be presented in this meeting as well as the issues those alternatives address, specifically related to oversize vehicles and trucking. Sam Tyler, DOWL Project Engineer, added the project team has also been coordinating with Solid Waste Services.



Kelly Kilpatrick, DOWL Project Manager, began the power point presentation that served as the basis of discussion throughout the rest of the meeting. Kelly then reiterated the purposes and objectives of the project, including the requirement to preserve and retain the existing bridge. Galen discussed the team's consideration for future bridge replacement in designing improvements that can be accommodated in a future project. Kelly then described the existing bridge and vertical clearance as it relates to trucking through the area.

Galen described the queuing issues in the project area during morning peak hours and confirmed that ATA members are familiar with those issues. He added the project team is focusing on maintaining or improving safety in the area for all users. He described the difficulty drivers have turning onto Eagle River Loop Road from the northbound and southbound Glenn Highway off ramps and VFW Road at peak morning hours, where often drivers are offering "courtesy gaps" to allow other drivers into the turning lane. This practice is unsafe and relies on the driver judgement rather traffic strategies.

The double left alternative was the first discussed. This alternative converts the through lane to a combined left and through lane, providing double left-turn lanes from westbound Eagle River Loop Road to southbound Glenn Highway on-ramp. Positives include low impacts to right-of-way (ROW) and utilities and lower cost. Negatives include lack of improvement for operational deficiencies elsewhere in the project area and for Solid Waste Services (SWS) truck operations. Galen added that another reason for long queues is the tight turn radius for left turns, which adds geometric delay and requires slower speeds for turning vehicles.

Next, the dual loop ramp and pedestrian tunnel alternative was presented. This alternative involves building a loop on-ramp from westbound Eagle River Loop Road onto southbound Glenn Highway and a separate looped pathway through a pedestrian tunnel. Positives of this alternative include no conflicts with traffic heading toward Anchorage and the separate pedestrian tunnel. However, similar to the dual-left turn alternative, this alternative does not improve operations at other intersections in the project area. This alternative has the highest cost and requires major utility relocations and ROW acquisitions from JBER and the Anchorage Landfill. Galen added this alternative provides a larger radius than the existing left-turn, allowing for faster speeds, which would reduce queue lengths. Additionally, this is a two-lane loop ramp, which would be a first for the state of Alaska.

The diverging diamond interchange (DDI) with roundabouts, or divergababout, alternative was the final alternative presented. Traffic across the bridge crosses over like the interchange at Glenn Highway and Muldoon Road (Glenn-Muldoon). This alternative can improve operations and performance, is especially well-suited for interchanges with heavy left-turn movements, and could reduce high-cost utility impacts and ROW acquisitions compared to the dual loop ramp. Turn movements within this alternative were presented for clarity through an animation and graphics depicting each movement through the interchange.

Galen concluded the meeting by thanking attendees for their participation.



Comments and Questions Summary

Following is a summary of comments and questions made during the meeting:

- Samantha Brown, United Freight and Transport, mentioned her company's policy to send any over height vehicles ramp-to-ramp instead of under the bridge. She confirmed over-height vehicles are those 15 feet or taller, which require a permit for the Alaskan highways, and are now required to travel ramp-to-ramp rather than under bridges. Vehicles over 17 feet require additional permitting and coordination.
- Samantha mentioned her drivers are familiar with the morning peak traffic on the intersection.
- Samantha asked if the divergabout would have truck aprons.
 - o Galen confirmed they would have truck aprons, and responded a large purpose of this meeting is to discuss where accommodations would be needed for trucks and other vehicles.
- Randy Efird, Weaver Brothers, confirmed the divergabout alternative is like the Glenn-Muldoon interchange.
 - o Kelly added when the Glenn-Muldoon interchange was constructed, there were very few large or oversize vehicles (12 in eight years). Now, there are hundreds of vehicles that pass through the area, likely due to changes in oversize criteria to be inclusive of more vehicles.
 - o Kelly asked if Samantha has ever had trucks that must go over the Glenn-Muldoon interchange to avoid the going under bridge. Samantha said she has never had that happen. Randy added he knows other companies have had trucks go over the intersections to avoid traveling under the bridge, with permits to shut down the intersection.
- Randy asked if there is enough space in the area to allow for truck and oversize vehicle accommodations.
 - o Galen responded this would be constructed similar in size to other Anchorage area roundabouts, and there is plenty of room on the east side with less room on the west side that would require a small amount of ROW from the landfill. Additionally, the project team plans to work with the trucking community throughout design to accommodate trucks and large vehicles, including over-height permitted vehicles.
- Randy mentioned there are many kinds of vehicles and loads that could be over size, including trucks, tractor-trailers, and construction equipment and vehicles.
 - o Samantha commented over-height vehicles would need to go over the bridge, while over-width or over-length vehicles would be able to stay on the Highway. Kelly added if vehicles are both over-height and over-length, accommodations would need to be made on the intersection as well. Galen added the roundabouts could be constructed so permitted over-sized vehicles could drive on paths through splitter islands on the roundabouts not typical for drivers, like



- the red concrete paths through the Glenn-Muldoon interchange allowing ramp-to-ramp movements.
- Galen asked attendees how they would design the divergabout to allow for oversize vehicles to get through.
 - o Samantha said she appreciates the ideas that the project team has already shared and the willingness to communicate throughout design.
 - o The suggested vehicle to design special accommodations for is a WB-92D (truck with double trailer), which should be confirmed with ATA.
 - Randy asked if the divergabout is the preferred alternative.
 - o Galen responded it is the alternative that best solves the known issues on both sides of the interchange, and the project team is meeting with other key stakeholders, including Solid Waste Services, Bike Anchorage, and MOA Transit, to get feedback on the proposed alternatives before selecting a preferred alternative.
 - Randy asked about traffic management on certain dates like free dump days at the landfill.
 - o Kelly responded DOT&PF does not design for specific events, rather persistent conditions like morning traffic peaks. Galen agreed and added the landfill may need to acquire permits from DOT&PF for events that would cause added traffic and potential intersection blockages. Galen added this project is not yet in design, but these specific situations will be considered as design begins.
 - Randy commented that he does not mind roundabouts, despite the learning curve for everyday drivers, but if there is enough space to get a set (single tractor with two trailers, also known as a double) through he could support the design.
 - o Galen asked if that is a common situation in this area. Travis Roth, Sourdough Express, responded that situation happens most commonly when the northbound weigh-station sends trucks back toward Anchorage for specific reasons, but not very often. Randy agreed that double trailers are not common in this area. Another situation he thought this would occur was when the company supports the Eagle River Lions Club's occasional events.
 - o Galen asked what movements in the divergabout are important to consider for a double trailer. The movements mentioned included the northbound-to-eastbound movement off the highway, which would have a slip lane, and the rare northbound-to-southbound U-turn.
 - o Samantha commented the divergabout design is well-suited to accommodate U-turns since trucks would bypass both roundabouts with this movement.
 - Samantha commented the divergabout design sounds well thought-out and complimented the project team on the work so far.
 - o Galen thanked Samantha for her comment and added the team has presented this information at a public open house, three community councils, and a Chugiak Birchwood Eagle River Rural Road Service Area (CBERRRSA) meeting. Additionally, Galen discussed the importance of educating the public about using



new traffic controls or interchanges before implementing them, rather than after.

- Kelly mentioned using a rolled curb on all splitters and a red patterned truck apron would accommodate oversized movements.
- Travis mentioned the longest piece of equipment used by Sourdough Express is a 100-foot wheelbase extended flatbed trailer.
- Kelly said it would be nice to have dimensions of large equipment that will need accommodations to add to software simulations during design. Randy mentioned that Specialized Transport & Rigging Alaska (STR) and Carlile Transportation would likely have more oversize vehicles than other companies and would be good to include in planning. Travis invited the group to come take photos of different truck sizes.
- Galen asked what a reasonable speed for roundabout modeling would be.
 - o Samantha and Travis responded that 15-20 mph would be a preferred speed, remembering that truck drivers must consider other drivers that do not allow enough time for trucks to enter intersections. Randy added drivers will go as slow as needed to transverse through a roundabout while considering the safety of other vehicles.
 - o Galen commented the accommodations for large trucks also raises the speed of other vehicles through roundabouts, so it is important to balance accommodations with safety so the project team will likely use a slower truck turning speed for design.
- Galen asked what other features are important to trucks and truck drivers when considering roundabouts.
 - o Randy mentioned, and Samantha agreed, he likes the C Street-Minnesota roundabouts the best and rated Huffman-Seward roundabout the worst due to the tight turns and smaller roundabouts. Travis mentioned, and Randy agreed, when training drivers on doubles, his company will take drivers around the C Street roundabouts for practice. Galen responded the sizes in this alternative would mirror the size of the newer Dowling roundabouts.
- Randy shared his appreciation for the opportunity to weigh in on this interchange early, especially along with other key stakeholders like non-motorized user groups. He suggested a meeting combining user groups because sometime different interests are viewed as in conflict when different interests can all be accommodated.
- Galen, Kelly, Sam, and Morgan thanked Randy, Samantha, and Travis for their willingness to meet early with the project team and share comments.