

Meeting Summary

PDX 2045 Planning Advisory Committee Meeting 6

March 17, 2025; 5:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Port of Portland HQ, Chinook Room (eighth floor) and Zoom

Attendees:

PAC Members

- Aidan Simpson
- Allyssa Bromley
- Angela DeHaven
- Anne Sweet
- Brian Kuzera
- Caleb Powell
- David Duncan
- David Van't Hof
- Heather King
- Jennie Heidrick
- Kathy Bareno
- Keith Miller
- Laura Young
- Mark Luna
- Maryhelen Kincaid
- Matthew Hodson
- Mychal Hornbeck
- Pete DeVasto
- Philip Rowe
- Phuong Truong
- Roger Gonzalez
- Stephanie Barnes
- Steven Lowe
- Tsering Sherpa
- Xavier Phanthongphay

Port of Portland

Aaron Ray
Arainnia Armendariz
David Zielke
Evan Howington
Jeff Broderick
Jennifer Rabby
Mina Mora-Gonzalez
June Reyes
Sean Loughran

Consultant Team

Bridger Wineman, EnviroIssues
Cadence Purdy, EnviroIssues
Cameron Modjeski, Ricondo
Chad Townsend, Ricondo
Jenna Johnstone, Ricondo
Julie Gueho, JMG Consulting
Suzanne Donaldson, Donaldson Consulting

Welcome and Introduction

- PAC Facilitator, Suzanne Donaldson, welcomed PAC members to their sixth meeting and reviewed the agenda, as well as PAC meeting ground rules. Meeting goals included an overview of projected international air service development, existing international facilities, and opportunities to expand International Arrival Facilities (IAF).

International Air Service Development

- David Zielke, Port of Portland Director of International Air Services, provided an overview of international airlines and routes at PDX. David works with an international service committee to determine how to best reach the region's economic needs.
- David reviewed transatlantic market trends over the years. Traffic to Europe is now at an all-time high. The PDX transatlantic market is highly seasonal, with the highest travel demand for both Oregon and Europe in the summer. Because there is not enough passenger demand in the winter season to support additional service, the Port of Portland (Port) is looking to offer more seasonal summer service to match travel demand. Since PDX is not a large international hub, we hope to keep our existing nonstop international flights by having enough passengers.
- David shared a map of international markets the Port would like to service in the future, such as Seoul-Incheon (ICN). Other well-connected markets include Tokyo's Haneda (HND) and Narita (NRT).

Q: Given we are a west coast airport, is there a reason we have lost some of our nonstop flights to Asia?

A: Flights to Asia are 21 percent below 2019 levels (pre-pandemic) yet climbing. Flights to China from PDX are down 50-60 percent compared to 2019, and down nationally as well. We hope to have enough demand for nonstop flights to Asia in 2026.

Q: Are there theories for why the Asia demand has not gone up like European demand?

A: U.S. demand has only rebounded to 88 percent compared to 2019, and China demand is still only 75 percent compared to 2019. Other big hub airports in places like San Francisco, Seattle, and New York have more corporate and local traffic, and serve domestic markets. We do not have the luxury of that level of business demand, though Nike and Intel have been a big driver of our trans-Pacific flying in the past.

Q: Demand for travel to Japan is increasing. If PDX cannot fill the existing nonstop service to Tokyo three days a week, what can be done to ensure we do not lose that flight?

A: The Delta flight to Tokyo is already cancelled. We meet with all the airlines, including budget airlines. None have aircraft available for flying that market right now. Also, both passengers and airlines need to have an interest and capability to introduce these services, and this demand for airlines needs to include both leisure and business travel needs. So far, that demand has not been met. However, PDX's number one priority for future international flights is in Asia.

Q: What is the forecasted demand for travel to Vietnam?

A: It is growing exponentially, like Taipei and Singapore. People are traveling there, though there is not enough demand to fill an airplane for a nonstop flight. It is much more likely at this point to have a flight into an Asian hub and then a connection to Vietnam.

Q: How do you measure if a route is successful? Is it based on how full the flights are?

A: Airlines determine if a route is successful based on profitability. Airlines carefully look at operating costs, airport costs, landing fees, and passenger demand. They know which routes are profitable and these are the routes that are served.

Q: Will there be more international flights to Mexico?

A: Mexico City is a target market, but we did not find a flight this year. In 2026 we are hoping to offer a flight to Mexico City with Aeroméxico.

Public Comment (if needed)

- No public comments were made.

PDX and Industry Updates

- Aaron Ray, Port of Portland, shared updates from the PDX 2045 Interagency Advisory Committee meeting that occurred earlier that day. Agency partners on the committee include Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), TriMet, City of Vancouver, and others. Port staff will share results from the Interagency Advisory Committee with the PAC and vice-versa.
- At PDX, Alaska Airlines is implementing a schedule change starting a few weeks from now that will “bank” flights – providing more connections between locations. Summer may look different in terms of different times of day being busy.
- A new section of the terminal roof has been installed, the largest piece. Port contractors are on track to complete the terminal construction by early 2026. Aaron showed a timelapse video of the roof section moving into place.

PDX’s International Arrivals Facility

- Cameron Modjeski, Ricondo, provided an overview on what is required to host international flights at PDX. International gates must be connected to an International Arrivals Facility (IAF) through a sterile corridor. The IAF is governed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and out of the Port’s jurisdiction.
- DHS requires a certain size of facility per passenger capacity. What PDX has now is the bare minimum required to serve 500 passengers an hour.
- If passengers arriving at PDX are catching a connecting flight, they can enter the terminal at the connection to Level 2 Security Checkpoint (if the checkpoint is operating). Otherwise, they must take the shuttle bus with other non-connecting passengers to go around the terminal to the exit area. Once terminal construction is complete, passengers will exit into baggage claim.
- Cameron shared forecasts of international demand. Key takeaways are that we are already bringing in more passengers than the IAF was designed for. There are three options for sizing the IAF in the future. The next size up can process 501-1,000 passengers per hour, which would allow for three to four international flights at a time with room to spare, though expansion could come at the expense of nearby facilities. There are two more options for the IAF area: one that requires almost 40,000 square feet and can process 1,001-2,000 passengers per hour, and another that requires over 50,000 square feet and can process 2,001-3,000 passengers per hour.
- Some PAC members commented that they would prefer options other than the current bussing system, as it takes a long time to load the buses and requires multiple buses per arriving flight.

Q: Why are international passengers not allowed to walk to baggage claim (instead of bussing)?

A: International passengers arrive on Concourse D but cannot re-enter the terminal unless they are screened by TSA for a connecting flight. Passengers would have to walk all the way around the outside of the terminal to reach baggage claim, and the bus service reduces the walking distance.

Q: Can there be a moving walkway from the international arrivals area to baggage claim?

A: That is a potential option. The Port has considered a large, long hallway running on top of Concourse D from its end to the terminal. The Port needs to analyze whether a walkway on Concourse D could be wide enough and strong enough to support a moving walkway (“people mover”).

Terminal Expansion Considerations

- Cameron walked the PAC through the Port’s guiding principles for the terminal expansion.
- International flights account for nine percent of passenger activity at PDX. One tradeoff to consider is if the IAF were relocated closer to the new main terminal facility, it would have to displace something else, pushing domestic gates further from the central core of the terminal.
- Chad Townsend, Ricondo, provided the PAC with a refresher on 2045 gate requirements and the preliminary capacity evaluation of terminal facilities.
- He also provided an overview of preliminary capacity assessment for the terminal through maps showing future needs.
- Chad shared a map highlighting areas of development opportunity, showing that Concourse D requires upgrades to bring it into alignment with more recently built areas of the terminal.
- The ends of Concourses C, D, and E offer growth opportunities, although some of those are dependent upon decisions regarding the crosswind runway. Concourse D and the older part of Concourse E have the biggest deficiencies in terms of space and the oldest, least resilient infrastructure.

Development Decisions Activity

- Cameron shared a series of questions with meeting participants to spark discussion on airport development. Participants were asked to respond using Mentimeter and then the group discussed their thoughts on each question.

Now that you have a sense of future international demand, how would you size IAF at PDX?

Response count	Preference
16	Make it big enough for anticipated demand (larger footprint, could accommodate expected growth).
5	Make it a very large footprint that could accommodate growth beyond what is anticipated through 2045.
1	Keep it as is (undersized, no room for growth).

- The PAC discussed tradeoffs on where to expand. If a new IAF is built at Concourse E, this could mean a new pickup location at the end of the roadway.

If you chose to expand the IAF, would you:

Response count	Preference
9	Expand in the existing location.
6	Develop a new facility near the end of Concourse E.
5	Somewhere else.

- The PAC discussed reasons to expand closer to the terminal on Concourse C. This leaves room for larger aircraft closest to the terminal and eliminates the need for a bus.
- There is an opportunity to reconfigure the IAF in Concourse D, which would allow for the Port to make improvements to the upper and lower levels of Concourse D. Travel becomes easier if there is a junction between international and domestic travel instead of placing IAF at the end of a terminal.

Some IAF alternatives are not compatible with a crosswind runway. Would you prioritize terminal expansion and IAF over preserving the crosswind?

Response count	Preference
18	Prioritize terminal and IAF expansion.
3	Prioritize preserving the crosswind runway.

- IAF expansion was a high priority of PAC members, stating “IAF is PDX’s front door” and citing experiences of being very crowded traveling in IAF in the past. One PAC member shared that the potential can be so much higher for international travel, but our slow system makes it difficult for international travelers to make the connections they need to travel to our airport.

What is more important to you: shorter walking distances, amenities, less congestion and more space, and why?

Rank	Preference
1st	More space, less congestion.
2nd	Amenities (lounges, play areas, pet relief areas, etc.).
3rd	Shorter walking distances.

- Participants discussed the benefits of prioritizing space and shared the following: extra space becomes its own amenity, travelers do not like to feel crowded, most travel time is spent in holding areas, and extra space leaves room for growth.
- Participants discussed amenities, and how they make PDX unique and provide a quality experience to passengers.
- Participants discussed the importance of providing accommodations for people with disabilities, as well as ensuring design is accessible in the first place. Some participants suggested motorized wheelchairs for people to navigate the airport independently, as well as more benches to lay down. Offering a variety of amenities and different levels of support is helpful, as not everyone is comfortable with asking for wheelchair assistance.

Other feedback shared:

- Decisions should be based on a cost-benefit analysis.
- Find out what most people visiting the airport want to do and focus on meeting that need through quality experience.
- Continue to incorporate culture into building design.

Q: How many passengers at PDX have mobility needs?

A: The Port relies on terminal user surveys to determine this, as well as an accessibility committee.

Q: Does the Port have minimum standards of experience from an accessibility standpoint?

A: Yes, the Port follows ADA requirements and has its own accessibility design standards for terminal facilities. The Port has accessibility guidelines on when a people mover is necessary. The Port's standards are updated regularly based on public needs and feedback received.

Q: Is there a definition for "amenities"?

A: Terminal amenities refer to anything that is not related to the secure processing and enplaning/deplaning of passengers. Amenities are everything else that is optional and improves the passenger experience.

Q: Why not let people pay a fee to use a golf cart?

A: The Port would consider carts a mitigation measure and would rather avoid the need for them through thoughtful design.

Q: How does the Port estimate if holdroom capacity is enough?

A: The standard is based on the largest aircraft size that can park at the gate, an assumption that the plane is eighty five percent full, and providing seating for eighty-to-eighty five percent of passengers. There is flexibility to use adjacent holdrooms to meet capacity.

Q: Does the team expect international travel will stay at nine percent of flights in the future?

A: Yes, we expect the proportion of international to domestic travel to stay the same.

Q: Have we lost international travel demand because the current IAF is old?

A: Lack of demand for international air service is not the result of the aging condition of Concourse D or the condition of the existing IAF. Airlines provide service based on the profitability of routes, not necessarily user experience.

Q: Does international travel at nine percent of all trips at PDX include trips that go through different domestic airports before reaching Portland?

A: The nine percent is only for nonstop flights from PDX internationally and does not include flights that connect to another domestic airport before flying internationally.

Q: As Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is at capacity in terms of land area, will demand from the Seattle region overflow to PDX?

A: Yes, we consider this as an alternate scenario as part of forecasting.

Q: Are noise impacts considered when deciding where to expand facilities?

A: Yes, noise is considered through the master plan process, but it does not relate to the location and size of the IAF.

PAC Next Steps

- The next meeting will cover functional area alternatives and requirements on May 19, 2025. The team expects the PAC will continue to meet through about December 2025.
- The project team is holding their first PDX 2045 Open House will at Leodis V. McDaniel High School March 19, 2025, 5-8pm.

PAC 6 Make-Up Session

April 7, 2025; 11:00AM – 12:30 PM

Zoom

Attendees

PAC Members: Allyssa Bromley, Pete DeVasto, Mychal Hornbeck

Port of Portland: Jennifer Rabby, Aaron Ray

Aaron shared the same presentation that was given at PAC Meeting #6.

Q: Is the end of Concourse D the only decent location for international gates or could we move them elsewhere as we consider expansion options?

A: Great question – we will be discussing that later.

Jennifer led the group through a discussion of the Mentimeter questions that were discussed in PAC 6.

Now that you have a sense of future international demand, how would you size international arrivals facilities at PDX?

- Participants thought that it made sense to make it big enough to accommodate anticipated demand, but not to oversize the facility because demand for international air traffic and flights offered by airlines can fluctuate.

If we were to expand the IAF, how would you do so?

- Would it be better/more cost effective to build a completely new IAF on Concourse E instead of trying to improve the existing facility on Concourse D?
- Concourse E is already a long walk, so this should be considered. Even if an additional drop off/pick up facility were added, consider proximity to parking options.
- Concourse D is the oldest part of the airport and relocating IAF there might warrant a complete demolition and rebuild rather than a remodel.
- Could we move American Airlines to the end of Concourse D and then use the end of Concourse C for an IAF as additional gates are added there?

Some IAF alternatives are not compatible with a crosswind runway. Would you prioritize terminal expansion and IAF over preserving the crosswind?

- Both participants agreed that it was important to prioritize the terminal and IAF expansion over preserving the crosswind.
- Expanding opportunities for airlines means growing business opportunities in the region, while the crosswind runway is rarely used.

What is more important to you: shorter walking distances, amenities, less congestion and more space, and why?

- Providing more space and less congestion was the top choice of participants.

- More space allows for more accessibility considerations, including more wheelchairs, bag carts, etc., while having a lot of congestion can make navigation difficult for those with accessibility challenges.
- Shorter walking distances is also important but can be circumvented by having more assistance available.
- Amenities were less of a priority since we are not an airport with a lot of layovers where people spend extended periods of time.
- We should consider what are we doing to be accessible to all travelers? How do you request assistance, get bag carts, etc., especially if you encounter flight delays?

General discussion that followed included:

Q: With Alaska's increased presence, and space being "tapped out" at SeaTac, is there more demand at PDX?

A: Alaska is moving to a "banked" schedule at PDX to facilitate more flight connections starting this month and ramping up through summer. We have not had this sort of a flight structure in the last few years. This banked schedule is like a scenario we were anticipating in the forecast by 2030, though it is happening sooner than projected. The good news is that we can accommodate Alaska's new schedule even while we are down a few gates for Terminal Core Redevelopment Project (TCORE) construction.

The Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREC) of Southwest Washington looks for opportunities to recruit businesses to the region, and they have discussions about how PDX provides access to the rest of the country.

Alaska Airlines is addressing some of the "holes" in their network to add flights to the top unserved markets. We are also getting back some of the regional flights (e.g. PDX to Redmond).

Q: It is a challenge funneling everyone through one main exit way in the terminal. This may become more challenging as Alaska Airlines adds banked flights. How will PDX respond?

A: The Port has been working closely with Alaska to implement these schedule changes, including coordination on operations and making sure passenger bags get transferred for connecting flights.