

Aliquippa East Gateway Improvement Project

Public Officials Meeting minutes

Subject: Aliquippa East Gateway Improvement Project
Public Officials Meeting and Public Meeting
Location: Aliquippa Junior/Senior High School (Gene Karmazyn Blackbox Theater)
Date: August 5, 2025

Municipal Officials Meeting (4:00pm to 5:00pm):

Doug Seeley began the meeting with an introduction to the project and explained that PennDOT is working with the City of Aliquippa and Beaver County Corporation for Economic Development as part of a transportation improvements state grant. The City has already started preparing for the project by purchasing parcels and razing buildings within the area.

Derreck Poole provided an overview of the meeting agenda and introduced the design team members. Derreck then provided a brief introduction to the project and passed the presentation over to Greg Cerminara.

Greg explained that the goal of the meeting was to provide project information and obtain feedback from the community. Greg continued by explaining the Study Phase of the project, which has two parts, the first being Phase I, which identified and considered several alternatives, and Phase II reducing the alternatives down to those that meet the needs of the project.

The purpose of this project is to address geometric deficiencies of the existing interchange, to provide improved roadway continuity, and meet current design criteria.

The existing roadway geometry does not currently meet the latest design criteria based on roadway classification and traffic volumes. The current ramp junction geometry with S.R. 0051 does not provide sufficient acceleration and deceleration lanes. This insufficient geometry is severe enough to require stop control at each S.R. 0051 access points. This requires motorists to accelerate from a stopped position while entering S.R. 0051, which is classified as a principle arterial roadway with a posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour.

In addition, the local roadway network and route continuity is non-typical, leading to driver confusion, for the following reasons:

- The S.R. 51 ramps also serve as (signed) local roadways.

- Many of the S.R. 0051 junction points require travel over routes that provide the appearance of being indirect.
- The Franklin Avenue intersections within the interchange area are created by opposing offset roadways.

The team performed a desk top review of the environmental features, which were determined by desk top resource research. Greg introduced these features by reviewing the environment features map. He briefly discussed the cultural resources present and that the public will have an opportunity to provide input through the consulting party coordination.

Greg then explained the alternative designs, concluding that at the end of Phase II, two alternatives emerged that met the purpose and needs of the project. These alternatives were an at-grade signalized intersection and a traditional diamond interchange. He then described what these two alternatives would look like; what roadways would be removed and the reconfiguration of the local roadways. He then illustrated both alternatives with an early rendering.

Greg then provided a Pros and Cons to each alternative. They both meet the purpose and need of the project, both are similar with regards to property impacts, and they both are constructable. Of the two the at-grade intersection is the most efficient to meet the traffic needs, current and future. At this early stage of the project, right-of-way impacts (similar for both alternatives) are currently being evaluated. Required right-of-way takes are anticipated, in addition to temporary construction easements for access and/or construction staging.

The meeting was then turned back to Derreck who discussed the anticipated project schedule and costs. Derreck stated that the project is a locally sponsored project and that funding needs to be secured in order to approve environmental clearance and move into Final Design and Construction.

Anticipated Project Schedule:

Preliminary Engineering – 2025
 Environmental Clearance – 2026
 Final Design / Right-of-Way Acquisition – 2026
 Construction Start - 2027

Anticipated Project Construction Cost:

Diamond Interchange = \$17.5M
 At-grade Intersection = \$18.7M

Derreck explained how the attendees can access the project information through the project website and provided the contact information for the appropriate PennDOT representatives.

Municipal Officials Questions/Answers:

Q: City Official: Alternative 2: Water Authority has large trucks that go in and out of their property. Will the intersection cause issues with that traffic? Was full build of the area and industrial park considered?

- Yes, the intersection would be designed so that all vehicles, including trucks, would have full access in and out of the properties from each direction of SR 51.

Q: Station Street: Would access from northbound SR 51 at Station Street be eliminated at its current location?

- Yes, the revised access to Station Street from (and to) SR 51 will be via Franklin Avenue. Station Street will continue to serve as a two-way roadway serving only local access and have a cul-de-sac at the end closest to SR 51.

Q: City Official (Gill): Alternative 2 (at-grade intersection), traffic study performed, does it accommodate traffic to and from the industrial complex?

- Yes, both alternatives were designed to accommodate the industrial park and the future projected traffic volumes. Alternative 2 more efficiently accommodates the future projected traffic volumes.

Council Member Walker: The intersection option allows for an opportunity for people to see into the City and possibly be drawn into the City for food or opportunities. This provides the “gateway” to the City and the economic development opportunity. Removes the bridge with the fly-over and provides better visibility.

Q: What happens if there is development in the industrial complex, how will the intersection handle the large trucks? There is concern with the bottle neck situation going into the tunnel to the industrial complex. Was development in the industrial park, and the potential increase in traffic volumes, considered with regards to the new intersection handling the traffic?

- The traffic volumes to and from the industrial park were projected to the future design years based on developable land within the industrial park. It is an estimation. Both alternatives were designed to accommodate the resulting industrial park future projected traffic volumes. Alternative 2 more efficiently accommodates the future projected traffic volumes.

Council Member Walker mentioned that additional signage will help inform motorists to turn from SR 51 in order to go to the correct location of Aliquippa.

Q: Will there be sidewalks?

- Yes, crosswalks and sidewalks would be included in the design.

Q: Where did the project come from:

- Council Member Walker discussed the history of the project, how we got to where we are now. The project is locally derived project. Governor Wolf came to the City and asked what the State could do to help their economy. The City asked for help to improve the SR 51 interchange. The city received a grant of \$7M, which enabled them to start the process. Additional funds will be needed, and the Beaver County Economic Development will help secure funds to meet the local obligation.

The City and municipal officials remained to participate in the public meeting.