

FRAP FAQs

Freight Route Analysis Project - Frequently Asked Questions
December 14, 2004

Freight Route Designation Questions

1. Will designation as a freight route result in increased truck volumes?

Not necessarily. However, the freight route designation is proposed on a highway primarily because of existing freight volumes. Keep in mind that if freight traffic increases as projected, there will be a doubling of the existing truck traffic in 20 years, despite the designation.

2. Will the freight route designation affect the current speed limits?

No. Speed limits are based on safety, highway design, highway classification and the adjacent land uses.

3. How can local governments balance community goals with the need to accommodate through truck traffic?

Local and state officials can develop a management plan that will address community development and transportation planning in the corridor on a designated freight route within an STA (Special Transportation Area) or UBA (Urban Business Area). In a management plan, ODOT and local governments work together to balance local design and access with movement of "through" truck traffic.

4. Must a freight route designation be continuous?

The freight route system should be a continuous and connected grid of state highways. However, there may be places where it makes sense to exclude some portions of the highway, such as areas where the truck traffic drops off considerably.

5. Will the designation affect the daily operations or maintenance of a particular highway?

The freight route designation is not a major factor in the daily operations or maintenance of a particular highway. In practice, pavement thickness is primarily based on field tests, condition of the roadway, existing truck counts and configurations.

6. Will the freight route designation result in increased investment in highway improvements?

At this time, there is no guarantee of additional funding for 'freight routes' at the state or federal level. However, there is a commitment to consider freight in the state project selection process in House Bill 2041, which passed the Oregon legislature in 2003. There

has been discussion at both the national and state levels about creating more funding for roadways at points of transfer between ports and highways, and between railroads and highway.

Mobility Standards, Highway Design & Access Management Questions

7. How does the freight route designation affect the OHP (Oregon Highway Plan) mobility standard?

If the facility is a Statewide/National Highway System (NHS) highway, the maximum v/c ratio would decrease by about .05, except on rural lands where it remains the same. If the facility is a Statewide/NHS Expressway, there would be no change. For Regional and District Expressways, Table 6 in the OHP needs to be amended. The amendment will probably result in a decrease in maximum v/c ratio of .05 (about 5% less congestion allowed).

There is no separate mobility standard in Table 6 for a freight route designation on a Regional or District highway. The table will be amended to designate a separate Regional and District highway freight route mobility standard. The amendment will probably result in a decrease in maximum volume to capacity (v/c) ratio of .05 (about 5% less congestion allowed).

The Highway Design Manual (HDM) design v/c ratios and the OHP v/c would be affected (although not necessarily in similar ways). On page 4 is a table that compares planning mobility standards to highway design mobility standards with a freight route designation.

The HDM uses a combination of functional classification of roadways (freeways, arterials, collectors, local streets) with the OHP Highway category (Interstate, Expressway, Statewide, Freight Route, Regional, District, etc.) in developing the mobility standards. Because the OHP requires slightly higher mobility standards for freight routes, it is likely that the HDM mobility standards for some highways would change if the OHP mobility standards are changed.

A management plan may be used to establish an “alternative mobility standard” within a STA. If the highway is a Statewide/NHS, Regional or District Highway, the maximum v/c ratio would probably decrease by .05. There would be no change to UBAs because they do not have separate mobility standards.

8. Are there more stringent review criteria placed on future land use actions?

The OHP mobility standards can be more stringent (see question 7 above), and are part of the determination of significant affect per the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR). A zone change or comprehensive plan amendment may significantly affect a freight route but have no significant affect on a non-freight route, since the maximum v/c ratio will probably be less on a freight route. The mobility standards for both TPR and non-TPR reviews can affect mitigation requirements. Mitigation is required if the maximum v/c ratio is already exceeded, or if the effects of a development cause the maximum v/c ratio to be exceeded. Greater mitigation could be required on a freight route because the v/c ratio with the

development may need to be lowered more to meet the freight route maximum v/c ratio than the non-freight route maximum v/c ratio.

The effect would be greater on Regional or District Highways. Within a STA, there may be negotiated standards established in the adopted management plan.

9. Are there more stringent review criteria placed on access management?

Access spacing standards do not change simply because a highway section is designated part of the State Highway Freight System. Access spacing standards are based on State Highway Classifications, highway segment designations, and urban, rural, or Expressway designations. On highway segments where the OHP freight route designation requires higher mobility standards, design and spacing considerations for access management approach permits may be affected.

An access management approach permit is required when applying for an approach to a state facility. The specific cases where mobility standards may be required to be met for approach permitting approval are:

- a private approach in an urban area with reasonable alternate access;*
- any approach on an urban Expressway with alternate access; and*
- any public approach.*

10. Are there more stringent review criteria placed on highway design standards?

A freight route designation would affect highway design standards in a number of ways—cost implications would range from minor to significant. Two of the more important areas are travel lane width and truck accommodation. On page 4 is a table that compares planning mobility standards to highway design mobility standards with a freight route designation.

A freight route designation may require a wider “standard” travel lane width on certain urban OHP highway segment designation highways (Urban Business Areas, some Commercial Centers) and non-designated urban highways (Developed, and Traditional Downtown/Commercial Business District) that are not NHS.

There are potential effects of accommodating trucks for state highways that are added to the freight route system. About 135 miles (mainly rural highways- part of US 395, part of OR 140 and Highway 331) of proposed additional freight routes do not allow interstate vehicles (truck-tractor and semitrailer-75' long). If interstate vehicles were allowed on these highways, major roadway work (with significant environmental impacts) would be required for the highways to accommodate interstate vehicles.

Reference Table for OHP and HDM Performance Standards

MAXIMUM VOLUME TO CAPACITY RATIOS OUTSIDE METRO												
Highway Category	Inside Urban Growth Boundary						Outside Urban Growth Boundaries					
	STA		MPO		Non-MPO outside of STA where non-freeway speed < 45 mph		Non-MPO where non-freeway speed >= 45 mph		Unincorporated Communities		Rural Lands	
	Planning	Design	Planning	Design	Planning	Design	Planning	Design	Planning	Design	Planning	Design
Interstate Hwys and Statewide (NHS) Expressways	N/A	N/A	0.80	0.75	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.65	0.70	0.60	0.70	0.60
Statewide (NHS) Freight Routes	0.85	0.85	0.80	0.75	0.75	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.60	0.70	0.60
Statewide (NHS) Non-Freight Routes & Regional or District Expressways	0.90	0.90	0.85	0.80	0.80	0.75	0.75	0.70	0.75	0.60	0.70	0.60
Regional Highways	0.95	0.95	0.85	0.85	0.80	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.70	0.70	0.65
District/Local Interest Roads	0.95	0.95	0.90	0.85	0.85	0.80	0.80	0.75	0.80	0.75	0.75	0.70

Table 6: Maximum volume to capacity ratios for peak hour operating conditions through a planning horizon for state highway sections located outside the Portland metropolitan area urban growth boundary

Note: Planning Standard is from the Table 6, OHP. Design Standard is from the 2003 Highway Design Manual (HDM)

11. How do you resolve the issue if mobility standards cannot be met on a modernization project that is on a freight route?

The mobility standard for the modernization project is based on the Highway Design Manual and there is an exception process that could be used.

12. In an area characterized by small lots with frequent driveways, how would a freight route designation affect future consolidation for redevelopment that proposes using existing approaches for access?

The freight route designation would not affect the access situation under these circumstances, nor does it change the access management rules. At the point in time when redevelopment occurs, ODOT will be looking at the safest and most efficient way to provide access to the lots.

Highway Segment Designations Questions

13. When are management plans required for STAs and UBAs?

Management plans are recommended but not required for STAs or UBAs already designated (but not on freight routes).

Management plans are due concurrent with the segment designation for STAs or UBAs that are on existing freight routes.

Management plans would be due at the next update of the TSP or other legislatively mandated planning effort after the freight route designation for STAs or UBAs already designated but on proposed freight routes.

14. What will a management plan look like?

Action 1B.2 of OHP Policy 1B includes planning and development guidance for STAs and a bulleted list of about 12 requirements of a segment designation plan. The list of plan requirements are "as applicable," and the process is intended to rely to the extent practicable on pertinent past planning. Furthermore, ODOT is preparing additional guidelines on management plans to assist local governments. A relatively recent Transportation System Plan and/or downtown plan may achieve many, if not most, of the objectives of Policy 1B planning.

15. What sources of funding will be available for development of management plans?

It is likely that much of the work that communities have completed to date will fit into the management plans. The Transportation Growth Management Program is a resource for the development of management plans. There may also be some funding and staff support available at the ODOT Region level.