

AGENDA COVER MEMO

DATE: October 13, 2004

TO: Lane County Board of Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Public Works Department

PRESENTED BY: Tom Stinchfield, Transportation Planning Engineer

TITLE: PUBLIC HEARING AND ORDER/In the Matter of Endorsing New Freight Routes on Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Highways in Lane County

I. MOTION

Move approval of Order.

II. ISSUE

ODOT has requested comment from local governments along state highways that are being recommended as additions to the Statewide Freight Route system in Oregon. Proposed additions in Lane County include: Highway 126 (Florence-Eugene Highway); Highway 126 (McKenzie Highway); Highway 20 (extension of McKenzie Highway to Highway 22 and Santiam Pass); Highway 99W (Beltline to OR 99); and Beltline Highway (Highway 126 to Interstate 5). Existing Statewide Freight Routes in Lane County include: Interstate 5 and Highway 58 (Willamette Highway).

DISCUSSION

A. Background

The Freight Route Advisory Committee (FRAP) is working on a recommendation to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) on additions to the Statewide Freight System. This system is adopted through the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) or amendments to the plan. See Attachment 3 for the schedule. County received notice of this process in early September. MPC will be considering this information at their October 14, 2004 meeting. This will allow presentation of local comment on this plan prior to FRAP consideration at the end of October, 2004. See Attachment 1, page 21, for a list of proposed Freight Routes with a list of affected agencies. County staff will notify affected cities of this public hearing (as well as our STIP interested parties list). The OTC is scheduled to consider these changes on December 14, 2004.

The Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) is scheduled to consider this Freight Route proposal at their October 14, 2004 meeting. Because of the need to meet the schedule for the FRAP committee meeting, staff scheduled the Board hearing on this matter for October 13, 2004. Staff recommends that the public hearing be held on October 13, 2004, that the Board leave the hearing record open until October 20th, and take action on

October 20th after considering public testimony and any actions taken by MPC on the 14th.

B. Analysis

The ODOT highway system includes 7,448 miles of highway. The Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) currently designates 3,654 miles as Statewide routes on the National Highway System (NHS). These are the most important roadways in the state. Currently, 2,091 NHS miles are designated Freight Routes (or 57% of the NHS system). This proposal would add an additional 642 NHS miles to the Freight Route system, for a total of 2,734 miles (or 75% of the NHS system). This raises the issue of how Freight Route designation will help prioritize expenditures if three-quarters of the system is so designated. On the other hand, it clearly implies that getting funds for a project on the remaining one-quarter of the system will be difficult.

Implications of Freight Route Designation (see Attachment 1, pages 4-7)

The FRAP staff report (Attachment 1) comments on the significance of the Freight Route designation in several areas. Issues of Significant Impact include: Highway Segment Designations; Funding; Mobility Standards; and Highway Design. These are generally seen as positive: review of the need for Special Transportation Areas (STAs) in communities; higher priority for STIP funding; and higher Mobility and Design standards for projects. The issue of Mobility Standards can cut both ways. As we have seen in the project development for the West Eugene Parkway, a higher Mobility Standard (a lower volume-to-capacity ratio) can sometimes be an obstacle to project approval and construction.

Issues of Moderate Impact related to Freight Routes include: Planning requirements; Expressway designations; and Access Management. Planning requirements are increased for cities wishing to establish STAs (downtown business districts) or other commercial designations on Freight Routes. This might be an issue in Florence or Veneta related to OR 126 Florence-Eugene Hwy, or Junction City on OR 99.

Criteria for Freight Route Designation (see Attachment 1, page 7)

Two primary criteria were established in the 1999 OHP: tonnage (more than 4 million tons moved annually) and connectivity within Oregon. In addition, there are 12 potential factors for consideration identified by the FRAP committee. The committee evaluated 34 routes and recommends that 26 of them be added to the OHP Statewide Freight Route map. The five routes recommended in Lane County will be discussed below. (See page 10 for the complete list of all projects statewide). See also Attachment 4 (Maps 1-9).

1. OR 126 (Florence-Eugene Hwy), US 101 to Eugene (see Attachment 1, page 10)

Key Considerations: Statewide National Highway System (NHS) route; no potential recommended or adopted business districts (STA, UBA); Connectivity between US 101 and I-5.

Tonnage (annual): 1-3.99 million tons

Percent Trucks: 10-24.9%

2002 Truck Volume (daily): 500-1499 (west of Veneta); 1500-2999 (east of Veneta)

Staff Comment: Recommend approval. This route is in the "moderate" category in tonnage and truck usage, but the connectivity to/from Florence is important and is not conveniently provided by other existing truck routes to the north and south. This proposal is being referred to the cities of Florence and Veneta for comment.

2. OR 126 (McKenzie Hwy), I-5 to OR126/US20 (see Attachment 1, page 11)

Key Considerations: Statewide NHS route; no potential business districts (STAs or UBAs); Connectivity between I-5 and OR 22/US 20

Tonnage (annual): 1-3.99 million tons

Percent Trucks: 10-24.9%

2002 Truck Volume (daily): 500-1499 (lower McKenzie); 0-499 (upper McKenzie)

Staff Comment: Board may wish to endorse this route or remove it from the recommendation. It has many similar aspects to the Florence-Eugene Hwy. Differences include: more dense residential development along the route; lower truck volumes on the east end; environmental concerns for the McKenzie River and the EWEB water supply; and more redundancy in routes such as Hwy 58 for connectivity to the east.

3. OR 20, OR 126/US20 to OR22 (Santiam Pass) (see Attachment 1, page 11)

Key Considerations: Statewide NHS; needed to connect OR 126 to OR 22.

Staff Comment: Same truck characteristics as upper McKenzie. The recommendation on this route should be consistent with the McKenzie Highway recommendation above.

12. Beltline Highway, I-5 to OR 126 (see Attachment 1, page 12)

Key Considerations: Statewide NHS; Designated as MPO freight route; High tonnage and truck volumes

Tonnage (annual): 4-9.99 million (west end); over 10 million east end)

Percent Trucks: 10-24.9%

2002 Truck Volumes (daily): 1500-2999 (west end); over 3000 (east end)

Staff Comment: Recommend approval. Truck usage clearly justifies the designation. Given the high levels of existing congestion on the corridor, it will be difficult to meet performance standards in this corridor. However, since it is an expressway, the basic standards will be the same, regardless of Freight Route designation. Priority for future funding is the primary consideration here.

21. OR 99, OR 99W (Junction City) to Beltline Hwy (see Attachment 1, page 13)

Key Considerations: Regional Highway; High truck tonnage; no potential or recommended business districts (STAs or UBAs).

Tonnage (annual): 4-9.99 million

Percent Trucks: no data

2002 Truck Volumes (daily): 1500-2,999

Staff Comment: Recommend approval, with more information to follow. This proposal will be referred to Junction City to check on status of any request for an STA (downtown business district) designation. Staff has heard that local agency staff to the north (in the Cascades West ACT area) have recommended against OR 99 designation from Salem to Junction City. Will follow up, as information is available. We understand that there are concerns in communities along Hwy 99. I-5 is apparently seen as the preferred freight corridor.

C. Alternatives / Options

Option 1. Recommend to OTC that all five routes in Lane County be added to the Freight Route system as shown in the Order.

Option 2. Remove OR 126 (McKenzie Hwy) and US 20 from the list and recommend the remaining routes for inclusion.

Option 3. Further modifications to the recommended Freight Route system as determined by the Board.

D. Recommendation

Option 1 or 2.

E. Timing

Delay action until October 20, 2004 and leave the hearing record open. Consider MPC action from October 14, 2004 and public testimony.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION/FOLLOW-UP

Send letter of comment as approved by Board Order prior to October 25, 2004.

V. ATTACHMENTS

Order with Exhibit A (letter on Freight Routes)

Attachment 1 Freight Route Analysis Report (FRAP) Staff Report September 1, 2004

Attachment 2 Maps for Staff Report (Maps 1-9)

Attachment 3 Timeline for Freight Route Analysis Project (FRAP)

Attachment 4 Revised OHP Policy 1B Land Use and Transportation (OTC January 14, 2004)