

October 7, 2004

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Tom Schwetz
Subject: Item 4b Statewide Freight Route Analysis Report

Action Recommended: Discuss issues and opportunities associated with proposed State freight route designations and provide comment to ODOT.

Issue Summary:

In January 2004, OTC approved changes to Policy 1B of the 1999 Oregon Highway Plan (OHP). The goal of the revision was to simplify the highway segments designation process by recognizing existing characteristics and requiring written local government support prior to designations. An advisory committee was formed to participate in discussion and designation of new freight routes. The Freight Route Analysis Project (FRAP) Advisory Committee consists of several statewide stakeholders and is asking local governments near state highways to provide comment regarding additions to the Oregon Freight Route System.

Proposed Freight Route System 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)
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The map at the end of this memo illustrates the location of these proposed routes.

Existing Statewide Freight Routes in Lane County include:

- Interstate 5
- Highway 58 (Willamette Highway)

The FRAP outreach began in September. While ODOT will be preparing materials for a FRAP Advisory Committee meeting scheduled to be mailed out on October 14, 2004, comments may be submitted through the end of the month. The final product will be a recommendation to the OTC which will require a public hearing before the OTC. This OTC hearing is scheduled for December, ultimately resulting in an amendment to Oregon Highway Plan (OHP). Attachment 1 provides a draft letter of comment for consideration by MPC.

Criteria

The current state highway system includes 7,448 miles of highway. The OHP designates 3,654 miles as statewide routes on the National Highway System (NHS). These are the most important roadways in the state for freight movement. Currently, 2,091 NHS miles are designated Freight Routes (57% of NHS). This proposal would add an additional 642 NHS miles to the Freight Route System, for a total of 2,734 miles (75% of NHS). Freight Route designation may affect funding prioritization. If three-quarters of NHS is so designated, priority will be given to Freight Routes. However, designation does not guarantee prioritization nor does it guarantee funds.

The significance of the designation and the implications to other existing OHP policies helps to frame the criteria as to which freight routes should be designated. Attachment 2 provides a September 1, 2004 staff report developed by the FRAP Advisory Committee, which provides extensive detail on the process used to develop the proposed set of designations. The FRAP Advisory Committee found that a variety of issues had varying levels of significance. Comments on the issues which have significant impact are summarized in the following table:

ISSUE	COMMENTS
Highway Segment Designations	Management plans are required for STAs and UBAs designated Freight Routes. Regional freight routes designated by MPOs also require management plans. Mobility and access must be balanced within the System. Without completion of timely management plans, designation could be revoked.
Funding	Designation does not guarantee additional state investment in the routes. However, STIP criteria recommend the freight designation be considered for D-STIP, Modernization, and Preservation priority. Priority is also given to those projects that leverage local funds. Further, the STIP states that ODOT shall give priority to freight mobility projects that are located on identified freight routes of statewide and regional significance. Currently, the STIP's definition of freight mobility is broader than the OHP definition.
Mobility Standards	Designation requires higher mobility standards for freight routes other than State Highways. This will lead to a more rigorous standard for review of plan amendments and zones changes
Highway Design	Designation is addressed in the Highway Design Manual including roadway section widths, median barrier, weigh stations, intersection design, and cost implications. Design exceptions may be needed. OTC may not permanently reduce vehicle carrying capacity of a designated freight route when altering, relocating, changing or realigning a state highway unless safety or access considerations require the reduction.

In addition to the above issues the 1999 OHP included two criteria for the State Highway Freight System:

- Tonnage- more than 4 million tons moved annually
- Intrastate Connectivity- with significant freight generating areas

The FRAP Committee identified the need to consider additional factors that should be addressed when analyzing potential freight routes. Twelve potential factors were identified by the FRAP Committee:

- NHS Highways
- Freight routes in adjacent states
- Percent trucks
- Truck volumes
- Regional freight systems
- Truck length restrictions
- STAs, UBAs, and main streets
- Freight generating sites
- NHS Intermodal connectors
- Major freight routes on local facilities
- Urban/rural differences
- Seasonality

Attachment 2 p.8-10 provides more detail as to how data was obtained and considered in the evaluation of proposed routes.

As a result of analyzing related OHP policies, criteria and the related factors on each proposed segment, the FRAP committee evaluated 34 routes and is recommending that 26 of them be added to the OHP Statewide Freight Route map. Information on the five routes recommended in Lane County is provided in the following table.

Characteristics of Proposed Lane County Freight Routes

Route Segment	Annual Tonnage (millions)	Percent Trucks	2002 Daily Truck Volume	Key Considerations
OR 126 (Florence-Eugene Hwy), US 101 to Eugene	1-3.99	10-24.9%	500-1499 west of Veneta 500-2999 east of Veneta	Statewide National Highway System (NHS) route; no potential recommended or adopted business districts (STA, UBA); Connectivity between US 101 and I-5.
OR 126 (McKenzie Hwy), I-5 to OR126/US20	1-3.99	10-24.9%	500-1499 lower McKenzie 0-499 upper McKenzie	Statewide NHS route; no potential business districts (STAs or UBAs); Connectivity between I-5 and OR 22/US 20

Route Segment	Annual Tonnage (millions)	Percent Trucks	2002 Daily Truck Volume	Key Considerations
OR 20, OR 126/US20 to OR22 (Santiam Pass)	no data	no data	no data	Statewide NHS route; needed to connect OR 126 to OR 22
Beltline Hwy, I-5 to OR 126	4-9.99 west end Over 10 east end	10-24.9%	1500-2999 west end Over 3000 east end	Statewide NHS; Designated as MPO freight route; High tonnage and truck volumes
OR 99, OR 99W (Junction City) to Beltline Hwy.	4-9.99	no data	1500-2,999	Regional Highway; High truck tonnage; no potential or recommended business districts (STAs or UBAs).

Opportunities and Issues

Reviewing the existing Freight Route System is a positive step toward increasing freight mobility, safety, and access throughout Oregon. There are, however several implications worth considering as MPC comments on this initiative. The following opportunities and issues were identified from various FRAP and local resources.

Opportunities

- Jurisdictions would be able to leverage design, mobility standards, and policy with management plans for affected highway segments running through cities. (Area must be designated a Special Transportation Areas (STA), Urban Business Areas (UBAs), or Commercial Districts (CCs)).
- Freight Routes may receive higher priority for STIP funding (DSTIP or modernization, preservation, and bridge priority)
- The route designation process provides a functional opportunity to assess local needs to develop STAs, UBAs and CCs
- A more extensive state freight route system will facilitate more efficient intrastate truck movement
- Facility management plans provide opportunity to balance local accessibility and circulation needs with freight movement

Issues

- A higher mobility standard (a lower volume-to-capacity ratio) can sometimes be an obstacle to project approval and construction
- A higher mobility standard on a state highway that doubles, for example, as Main Street may negatively affect pedestrian and bike safety as well as accessibility to adjacent businesses

- Increased funding is not guaranteed
- STAs, UBAs, and CCs bring increased planning requirements. This has a larger direct impact on smaller communities' resources. Florence, Veneta, and Junction City are Lane County examples of communities that would be impacted by these requirements.
- Local plan amendments and zone changes will be held to a higher standard of review for mobility standards
- The eventual investment strategy for OHP could be diluted by expanding Freight System. The extent of expansion is not directly connected to funds for implementing new standards.
- Adding Regional and District Highways to the State System could undermine the hierarchy of the existing classification system

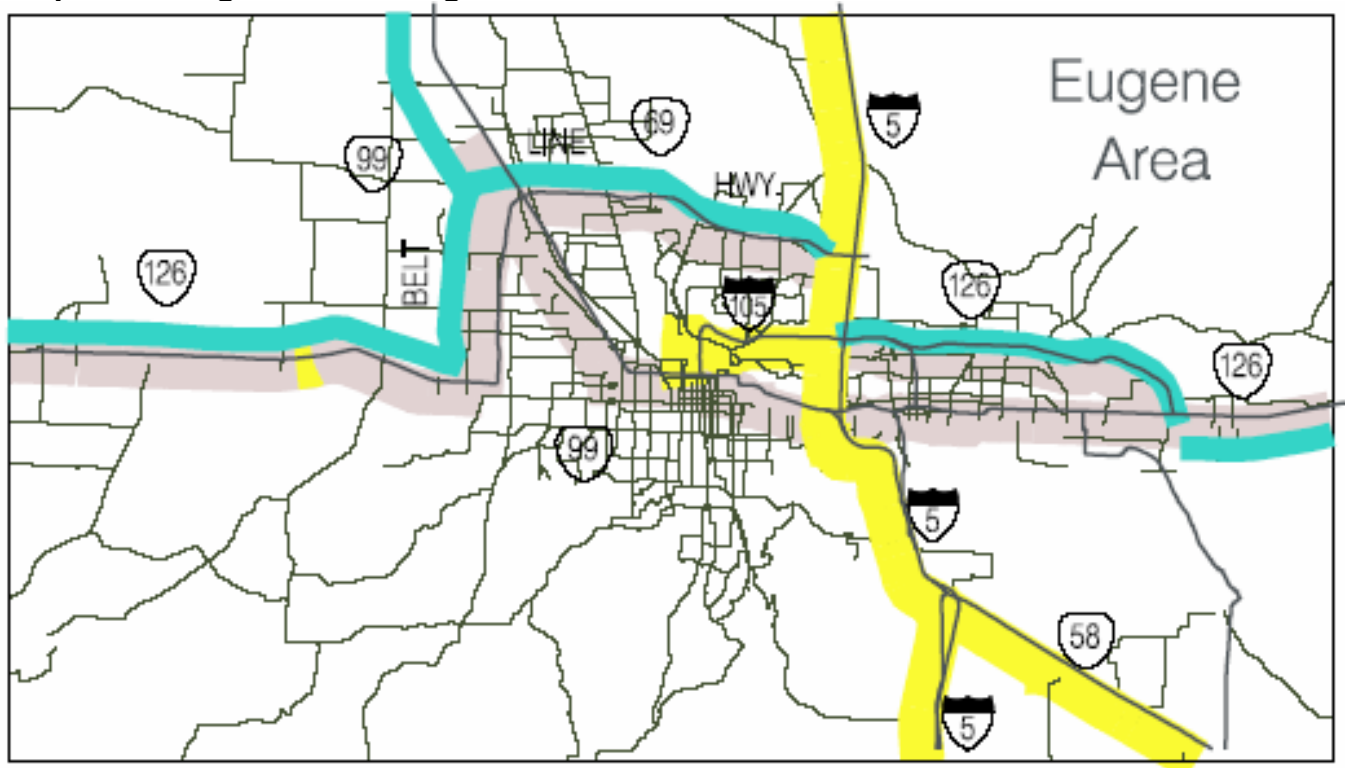
Recommendation

It is important to recognize the benefits of identifying a Statewide Freight Route System that catalyzes increased freight mobility, accessibility and safety standards. Further, there are potential positive economic impacts to the region in the proposed Statewide Freight Route System. However, particularly in urban areas, it is important to take adequate time to explore the overall implications of freight designation on local communities. This includes the need to facilitate a wide range of trip purposes and land use types. Also, the burden of increased planning requirements and increased rigidity of highway design will affect the local agencies within the MPO region.

While an opportunity exists to reexamine designating Special Transportation Areas, Urban Business Areas, and Commercial Districts that are aligned with our region's policy to support Nodal Development, specific structure for collaboration is not adequately defined in the Freight Route Analysis Project Staff Report. A more deliberate process is needed to work with local agencies to develop management plans prior to designation. This approach is needed to best leverage local decision making. Further, the FRAP recommended draft timeline, included as Attachment 2, illustrates an aggressive schedule to collect recommendations from local jurisdictions. Lane County has scheduled a Board hearing on this matter for October 13, 2004. Attachment 4 provides a copy of the Board's Agenda Cover Memo.

Staff is recommending that MPC request an extension of the public comment period to allow adequate time to assess the full implications of the designations and that management plans be conducted prior to formal designation by OTC.

Proposed Freight Route Designations



Source: ODOT Transportation Data Section and 2002 Transportation Volume Tables

Key

- █ State Highway Freight Route and NHS
- █ State Highway Freight Route Only
- █ NHS Only
- State Highway
- █ Recommended Additional Freight Route Designation

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft Letter of Comment
2. Freight Route Analysis Project (FRAP) Staff Report
3. Draft Timeline for Completion of the Freight Route Analysis Project (FRAP)
4. Lane County Board of Commissioners Agenda Cover Memo