

**Bypass #7 - Grants Pass Parkway, US 199, Redwood Highway,
Highway 25 (MP 0.35-0.25, Y-0.69-Y1.99)**

Description: The Parkway is a 2.1-mile Statewide Highway with four travel lanes, a median and a bridge over the Rogue River. The Parkway is the northern terminus of OR 199 and connects with I-5. The whole of the Parkway is within the Grants Pass UGB.

Final Environmental Impact Statement: 1979

Construction: 1989-1991

Purpose and need:

- Alleviate traffic congestion in downtown Grants Pass and existing 6th & 7th Street bridges.
- Contribute to vitality of the downtown central business district.
- Improve access to the industrial area.
- Facilitate anticipated residential development.
- Increase local and regional accessibility.
- Reduce accident rates in downtown Grants Pass.
- Accommodate projected future traffic volumes.

Population of Grants Pass: 1979 – 15,000
1992 – 17,475
2002 – 23,670

Land use: The Final Environmental Impact Statement said the ultimate build-out would be same regardless of the decision to build the project, but facilitating development in one place would reduce it on agricultural lands.

No major plan designations in the study area have occurred since the Grants Pass Comprehensive Plan was acknowledged in 1982. At the time the project corridor was completely in the UGB. Approximately 16 annexations to the City of Grants Pass have occurred along the Parkway since 1991.

The commercial development pattern along the Redwood Spur was underway before construction began on the Grants Pass Parkway. The City of Grants Pass had designated the area for commercial development. According to the *Grants Pass Case Study: Indirect Land Use and Growth Impacts Study*, "the area had several locational advantages that make it desirable for commercial development: good access to the Interstate, a large inventory of vacant land, good proximity to downtown and population centers in Grants Pass, and considerable through traffic. The impact of Parkway was to enhance strip's locational advantages by improving access from areas south of Rogue River." (p. 25)

Focus group members participating in the *Indirect Impacts Study* were disappointed in the lack of new industrial development. Josephine County staff said the Parkway did not have a significant impact on development south of the Grants Pass UGB. The UGB had moved to include the whole of the project area by 1982. Sewer and water line were also extended to fully serve the area.

Traffic volumes: Volumes prior to the construction of the bypass were in the 10,000 range. Traffic volumes through downtown on 6th and 7th Streets south of E and F Streets decreased by 11% from 1976 to 1995, but north of E Street they increased 45-48% near I-5. The Redwood Spur section of the Parkway near the I-5 Interchange saw an increase in traffic volumes of 148%.

Crash rates: The average crash rate for 1998-2000 was 2.23 per million vehicle miles traveled, lower than the statewide average for urban highways. The three top collision types were rear end, turning movement and angle.

Analysis: Construction of Grants Pass Parkway has not caused substantial land use changes in Grants Pass. The *Indirect Impacts Study* concluded that planning and public policy have consistently supported the development patterns and type of development that have occurred in the Parkway area. Moreover, the city provided restrictions and incentives for development to follow patterns established prior to issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement in 1979.

Commercial development has been strong, a land use trend that had begun before the Final Environmental Impact Statement was issued. Development was facilitated by accessibility. The authors of the *Indirect Impacts Study* concluded that "if the project had not been built, it is likely that persons living south of the Rogue River would be less willing to cross the river to shop along the Redwood Spur. Moreover, without the Parkway, the types of commercial development found along the Redwood Spur may have been duplicated south of the Rogue River." (p. 40)

According to the *Indirect Impacts Study*, the inaction of landowners was a key factor in the limited industrial development.

The Parkway appears to be functioning as expected. Since it has been classified as an Expressway, access standards are tighter. ODOT is attempting to reduce the number of approaches as opportunities arise.

Primary sources: *Grants Pass Case Study: Indirect Land Use and Growth Impacts, Interim Report, 1999*