Bypass #10 - Corvallis Bypass – South, US 20, Corvallis-Newport Highway, Highway 33 (MP 54.03-56.8)

Description: The Environmental Impact Statement was for a full bypass connecting US 20, OR 34 and OR 99W south of the Corvallis downtown area via a new road east of the Willamette River, intersecting with OR 34 east of Corvallis. It was to extend to an interchange with US 20 and with OR 99W north of the downtown. Only Phase 1 has been built. OR 34 is the principal link to I-5. The bypass is a two-lane roadway from the south OR 99W interchange to OR 34 and involves one bridge crossing of the Willamette River. It passes through agricultural and open space lands on the east side of the river. Signalized connections are at the termini—OR 34 and three intersections with the 3rd-4th Street couplet. US 20 is a Statewide Highway on the National Highway System.

Construction of west section of bypass: 1961
Final Environmental Impact Statement: 1983
Construction of east section of bypass, Phase I: 1992

Purpose and need (for east section):

- To provide an alternate route for through traffic, particularly heavy truck traffic so that it can bypass downtown Corvallis.
- To reduce congestion, improve safety (especially for pedestrians and bicyclists), and reduce noise and air pollution in the downtown area. This would result in enhancement of the economic viability of the downtown due to improvement of the shopping environment.

Population: Population of Corvallis in 1983 was 42,420. Population in 1992, the time of construction, was 44,810 and has since grown to 51,040.

Planning: The *City of Corvallis Comprehensive Plan*, adopted in 1980, indicated a bypass was needed. The *Corvallis Downtown Urban Renewal/Redevelopment Plan*, adopted in 1978, called for Phase I of the bypass to route through auto and truck traffic around the commercial core area and to establish a compact pedestrian-oriented commercial core area to serve as the regional shopping center for the Corvallis trade area. The Linn County Plan did not mention a bypass, but the Board of Commissioners supported the construction of Phase I east of the Willamette River and supported an exception to LCDC Goal 3, Agriculture.

Land use: Existing land uses immediately adjacent to the east end of Phase I of the bypass in 1980 were agricultural and open space, including land in the Willamette River Greenway and land in the floodplain. The west side of the project was adjacent to the downtown core area.The bypass east of the Willamette River remains outside the UGB.

Traffic volumes: In 1980 ADT within the downtown Corvallis core ranged from 16,900-37,000. The Final Environmental Impact Statement predicted traffic through downtown in 1995 would be 24,800-41,700 ADT without the bypass.

Crash rate: The accident rate on the 3rd-4th Street couplet was 13.61 accidents per million vehicle miles, substantially higher than the average rate of 5.11 for primary urban state highways. Over 420 accidents were reported on this couplet during the period from 1976-1980. Most were angle, rear-end and turning accidents. The average crash rate for 1998-2000 was 1.12 per million vehicle miles traveled, lower than the statewide average for urban highways. The top collision types were the same as in the 1970s: rear end, turning movement and angle.

Analysis: In the *Corvallis Case Study: Indirect Land Use and Growth Impacts*, businessmen explained that increased access from the South 3rd Street Project and bypass was a positive factor in the limited additional development and infill of industrial lands occurring in South Corvallis.

According to the City's *Transportation System Plan* adopted in 1996, traffic volume on the 3rd/4th Street couplet in downtown Corvallis decreased by 20% after the bypass construction.

The growth in the economy in the 1990s resulted in an increase in the rate of population growth and all types of development. The construction of the Corvallis Bypass was generally seen as a positive by businesses and residents for reasons of access, capacity, safety, and appearance.

No additional development adjacent to the bypass on the east side of the river has taken place. For traffic on the bypass, safety has been improved. It appears that the purposes of the bypass project have been achieved.

Primary sources:

- *Corvallis Case Study: Indirect Land Use and Growth Impacts of Highway Improvements, Final Report, SPR Project 327, June 2001*
- *Corvallis Transportation Plan, August 1996*
- *The Corvallis Bypass, Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1983*