

**Amendment to 1999 Oregon Highway Plan**  
**BYPASS POLICY**  
**April 16, 2003**

Bypasses are highways designed to maintain or increase mobility for through traffic. Generally they relocate the highway alignment around a downtown, an urban or metropolitan area or an existing highway to provide an alternative route for through traffic using that highway. Sometimes they also function as principal urban arterials. Bypasses require good system management to protect the significant public investment and achieve mobility and livability goals.

The objectives of the Bypass Policy are

- To maintain and enhance the utility of the state highway investment,
- To assure land uses that are consistent and compatible with Oregon statewide land use goals,
- To identify the appropriate function of bypasses in the transportation system, and
- To guide the long-term operation of bypasses through agreement on land use and transportation management actions.

To attain these objectives, bypasses require local and state policy coordination involving land use, local street patterns, access control, design characteristics, the bypassed facility, and jurisdictional transfer under ORS 366.

**Why Build a Bypass**

The desire for a bypass often evolves from growing congestion and safety problems on a state highway that is serving both as a regional highway and as a main street for a city. The highway is trying to serve both efficient freight and through travel and access to local business and residential areas. As traffic grows, the highway can serve neither purpose well, resulting in inefficient travel for through traffic and congested and unsafe accesses for local businesses and residences. Roadways that best serve these functions have opposite characteristics: Regional through travel is best served by limited access facilities that allow higher speeds and require infrequent stops. Downtown areas, on the other hand, require significant access opportunities, parking, and a safe, friendly pedestrian and bicycle environment. As congestion increases, regional travel and local access may need to be separated.

When the new bypass is constructed, new development is often drawn to the new facility and pressure builds for adjacent land uses to intensify. Unless controlled, this pressure could result in safety and operational problems that could detract from and impair the highway's performance and recreate the conditions that it was designed to alleviate.

Where urban areas concentrate activities along a state highway or near freeway interchanges, the mobility function is compromised as the highway is increasingly used for local trips

rather than through trips. Local access along a highway, in turn, tends to draw trips away from the existing downtown and business centers. Careful planning is required to ensure the vitality of existing neighborhoods, the downtown and business centers when addressing the zoning of land near a proposed bypass facility.

Bypasses are opportunities to improve the efficiency of not only highways, but also the overall transportation system.

**What Do Existing Bypasses Show**

The existing bypasses to which this policy applies vary in age, length and purpose. Most are either inside an urban growth boundary or both inside and outside the UGB. Generally, the bypasses were constructed to increase capacity for through traffic, increase safety, relieve congestion in downtown areas, and give access to particular parts of the bypass area.

Analysis shows that existing bypasses function well for regional and statewide traffic where land uses and plans are compatible with the through function of bypasses and where access to the bypass has been tightly controlled. These bypasses have improved safety and congestion in the downtown and other business areas. Vulnerable places seem to be interchanges, intersections and the ends of the bypasses.

**Land Use and Transportation Compatibility**

Since land use and transportation compatibility and access management are keys to an efficient bypass, ODOT and the local governments must ensure that development in the vicinity of the bypass will not reduce the highway's effectiveness or place its mobility function at future risk.

In order for a bypass to work effectively over the long term, local planning and zoning and the local street network must support the function of the bypass. Local transportation plans and ordinances should assure that land development patterns in the vicinity of the bypass will not use cul-de-sac or other interrupted street network patterns which cause reliance on the new facility for a large number of local trips. In most cases local streets should not directly access the new bypass facility. ODOT and the local governments must agree on the location of connections to the local street network and agree that local streets will be disconnected if they negatively affect the through function of the highway. Local governments and ODOT must agree on the amendment to the TSP or local transportation plan which incorporates the bypass.

Access management features should place priority on enhancing this mobility function. A bypass on a new alignment is protected from access by abutting property owners by ORS 374.405-415. According to this statute, ODOT has complete control of access rights on any bypass constructed after May 12, 1951 on new alignment. No property owner can connect to the bypass unless ODOT agrees to allow the connection. Where and how connections will be allowed should be part of the planning process.

A bypass and its supporting facilities require a significant public investment. Developing these facilities may require the joint financial resources of the state and local governments and intergovernmental agreement on land use and connections. When a proposed bypass is to be located in an area outside an urban growth boundary, ODOT and local governments will consider the impacts of the bypass facilities on agricultural, forest and other natural resource areas and comply with the Land Conservation and Development Commission statewide goals and exception processes.

**Bypass Classification**

• **New Bypasses**

A new bypass may be constructed as a freeway or as an Expressway. Freeways are the highest form of arterials and have full access control. A freeway’s primary function is to provide mobility, high operating speed and level of service while land access is limited. The full control of access is used to prioritize the needs of through traffic over direct access. Access connections, where deemed necessary, are provided through grade-separated interchanges.

Expressways are generally high-speed limited access facilities whose function is to move inter and intra urban traffic. Access is normally restricted to at-grade signalized and unsignalized public road intersections and interchanges. In rural areas, traffic signals are discouraged. Private property access is discouraged. In areas where there is no other reasonable access, private approach roads may be allowed. The Transportation Commission classifies highways as Expressways by amending the Highway Plan.

• **Existing Bypasses**

The Oregon Transportation Commission may designate existing state facilities as bypasses within this policy or in separate action. These existing bypasses may be classified as Expressways or as Statewide, Regional or District Highways without the Expressway classification. These classifications determine the applicable highway mobility standards in Oregon Highway Plan Policy 1F and access management standards in Appendix C.

**Proposed Bypass Policy**

Because the circumstances of each bypass vary, as do the particular issues and risks in each community, the application of the policy must be specifically fitted to the community. Therefore, this policy provides a checklist of considerations rather than an absolute criterion to be applied in each case. Jurisdictions, for example, may already have in place policies and ordinances that address these issues.

For new bypass facilities, implementation of the Bypass Policy will be iterative. Purpose and need in Action 1H.1.a should be addressed initially in a transportation system plan or corridor plan. The other provisions of Action 1H.1 and provisions in Actions 1H.2, 1H.4

and 1H.5 should be addressed in a refinement plan and/or a NEPA process, with decisions becoming more refined as the location and design of the facility become more specific. Further refinements may occur in the final design and construction phases of the project.

**Policy 1H: Bypasses**

Bypasses are highways designed to maintain or increase statewide or regional mobility. Generally they relocate a highway alignment around a downtown, an urban or metropolitan area or an existing highway. The goal of bypass facilities is to effectively serve state and regional traffic trips. It is the policy of the State of Oregon to build bypasses to provide safe, efficient passage for through travelers and commerce.

**Action 1H.1**

- a. ODOT and the affected local governments shall identify the need for a bypass in a transportation system plan and/or corridor plan in a manner consistent with Oregon Highway Plan Policy 1G.

In establishing the purpose and need for the bypass facility to guide its planning, design and development, ODOT and the affected local governments shall analyze the following:

- 1) Percentages of local and through trips projected at least over a 20-year period on the bypass;
- 2) Percentages, volumes and impacts of freight truck traffic;
- 3) Average trips on the proposed bypass facility based on build-out of the comprehensive land use plan, and
- 4) Crash data history on the nearby or impacted facility.

The purpose of the analysis is to determine whether a bypass solution is appropriate and to identify the mobility and safety problems that must be addressed over the long-term.

- b. In planning and developing a bypass project, ODOT and the local governments should use a refinement plan and/or a NEPA process to consider the following:
  - 1) Impacts on land use patterns and the local roadway system;
  - 2) Impacts on local businesses, major institutions and public facilities, and historic resources;
  - 3) Potential for using various kinds of public transportation, high occupancy vehicle lanes and ramps, ramp metering, park and ride lots and transportation demand management programs based on the population, density and forecasted growth of the bypass study area;
  - 4) Impacts to the natural, social and economic environment;

- 5) Methods of managing land use impacts on communities and natural resources;
  - 6) Impacts on minority and low-income populations; and
  - 7) Funding options including public-private partnerships, value pricing and tolling in accordance with ORS 366.292.
- c. After the location of the new bypass has been selected through the refinement plan and/or NEPA process, ODOT will establish joint agreements with the local and/or regional (metropolitan planning organization or county) governments on major bypass facility elements. These agreements may be in the form of interchange management plans, access management plans, master plans and/or interchange overlay zones for the bypass facility and its interchanges and intersections.
- 1) The agreements and/or plans must address, as appropriate,
    - Access management and site plan review,
    - Road connections,
    - Local street circulation,
    - Compatible land uses, and
    - Bypass termini protection.
  - 2) The local and/or regional governments are expected to amend the local and/or regional transportation system plans accordingly, and the Oregon Transportation Commission is expected to adopt the facility plan.
  - 3) In the event that joint agreement on plan concepts cannot be achieved, the Transportation Commission may adopt a facility plan for the project in accordance with OAR 731-15-065 regarding state agency compatibility with comprehensive plans.

**Action 1H.2**

For new bypasses on new alignments or on a combination of new and existing alignments, ODOT shall implement the following whenever practical:

**a. General character.**

- 1) Design the bypass for moderate to high speeds at freeway or Expressway standards for regional and statewide traffic.
- 2) On new alignments, avoid any direct private property access. ODOT shall acquire the rights of access and allow no reservations of access.

**b. Planning.**

In cooperation with local government:

- 1) Develop management plans for new interchanges, for existing interchanges and for interchanges replacing existing intersections when significant modifications are being planned.

- 2) Develop management plans for intersections with medium to high volume roads that include timelines or other triggers for grade-separation if connections are at-grade and traffic volumes or safety considerations warrant such separation.
- 3) Develop refinement plans or management plans, where appropriate, for the bypass termini with the local government to protect the mobility function of the bypass. These plans should be adopted in the local transportation system plan and as facility plans by the Oregon Transportation Commission.
- 4) Participate in development review when development proposals impact the bypass facility.

**c. Access Management and Connections.**

- 1) Limit the number of public approaches based on the road's function and maintenance of the capacity for regional and statewide transportation circulation. In most cases, connections will be limited only to state highways but in certain cases connections may be to local arterials.
- 2) On new bypasses on new alignments,
  - Require that connections to the bypass not significantly reduce the mobility function of the bypass.
  - Design and construct the approach roads to exceed the spacing standards for connections to Expressways or freeways described in the 1999 Oregon Highway Plan and OAR 734-51 whenever possible.
- 3) Design and construct approach roads consistent with an adopted access management plan.

**d. Interchanges/Intersections.**

- 1) Use grade separation and interchanges whenever practical and appropriate for safety and mobility.
  - If a public connection jeopardizes the mobility function of the bypass, it should be grade-separated or closed.
  - If 20-year projected traffic volumes demonstrate that intersections will need to be replaced with interchanges in order to maintain the mobility function of the bypass, before or during project development where possible, ODOT shall purchase enough right of way for future interchanges, their ramps and the access rights to them.
- 2) Space any traffic signals and other at-grade intersections in urban areas at appropriate distances, as set forth in OAR 734-051, so they may be replaced by interchanges or overpasses/underpasses in the future. Traffic signals must be approved according to OAR 734-020.

**e. Local traffic circulation.**

- 1) Provide for overpasses/underpasses that do not connect to the bypass and/or an alternative road system parallel to the highway to maintain local traffic and bicycle and pedestrian circulation in accordance with ORS 366.514.
- 2) Support provisions in the local transportation system plan for local circulation off of the bypass facility.

**f. Medians.**

Use medians according to Policy 3B of the 1999 Oregon Highway Plan on multi-lane highways.

**Action 1H.3**

Since existing bypasses are already in place, ODOT and the affected local governments should expect any changes to them to be incremental and accomplished through cooperation and a balancing of state and local interests. On *existing* bypasses, ODOT shall implement the following whenever practical:

**a. Planning.**

In cooperation with local government:

- 1) Consider development of management plans for new interchanges, for existing interchanges and for interchanges replacing existing intersections when significant modifications are being planned.
- 2) Consider development of management plans for intersections with medium to high volume roads that include timelines or other triggers for grade-separation if connections are currently at-grade and traffic volumes or safety considerations warrant such separation.
- 3) Consider development of refinement plans or management plans, where appropriate, for the bypass termini with the affected local governments to protect the mobility function of the bypass. These plans should be adopted in the local transportation system plan and as facility plans by the Transportation Commission.
- 4) Participate in development review when development proposals impact the bypass facility.

**b. Access Management and Connections.**

Move toward consistency with the access management standards in the 1999 Oregon Highway Plan and OAR 734-51 by

- 1) Providing reasonable alternate access to properties,
- 2) Encouraging consolidation of approaches and/or
- 3) Acquiring access to properties.

**c. Interchanges/Intersections.**

- 1) Use grade separation and interchanges where possible and appropriate for safety. If a public connection jeopardizes the mobility function of the bypass, it should be grade-separated or closed.
- 2) Space any traffic signals and other at-grade intersections in urban areas at appropriate distances, as set forth in OAR 734-051. Traffic signals must be approved according to OAR 734-020.

**d. Local Traffic Circulation.**

- 1) Provide for overpasses/underpasses that do not connect to the bypass and/or an alternative road system parallel to the highway to maintain local traffic and bicycle and pedestrian circulation in accordance with ORS 366.514.
- 2) Support provisions in the local transportation system plan for local circulation off of the bypass facility.

**e. Medians.**

On multi-lane existing bypasses, install non-traversable medians beginning at well-designed intersections in accordance with Policy 3B.

**Action 1H.4**

Before the Oregon Transportation Commission authorizes funding for construction of a new bypass, the affected local governments shall address the following for consideration by the Transportation Commission :

- a. Have an acknowledged transportation system plan unless exempt from transportation system planning requirements under OAR 660-12-0055 in which case the local comprehensive plan must address these policy provisions;
- b. Protect the regional and statewide mobility function of the new bypass through their comprehensive plan, transportation system plan, and implementing ordinances;
- c. Consider re-planning and re-zoning properties that could have an adverse future effect on the facility. This may include reducing the list of permitted and conditional uses which substantially impact the intersections and interchanges of the bypass;
- d. Develop ordinances that provide for local street connectivity in the vicinity of the bypass facilities, including provisions for parallel streets and limits on interrupted street networks which cause reliance on the bypass facility for local trips;
- e. Limit approaches to the bypass to public street connections consistent with the interchange management plan and OAR-734-051;
- f. Participate, if necessary, in financing the overall bypass project and/or its connections through monetary and/or “in kind” efforts and contributions such as moving and rebuilding utilities, providing right of way for and relocating local streets and street accesses, constructing elements of the local transportation system plans needed to support the project, relocating affected facilities, participating in transit components for the project and participating in the project as a tolled project; and



- g. Negotiate a jurisdictional transfer of the bypassed highway according to the provisions of Action 1G.5 and subject to the provisions of Policy 2C: Interjurisdictional Transfers.

ODOT will not require transfer of jurisdiction of a bypassed highway if the bypassed highway will continue to function as a state highway because it carries a significant number of vehicle trips that do not originate or terminate in the bypassed city or cities.

**Action 1H.5**

As part of the determination of project costs for the proposed bypass, determine the extent of investment in the bypassed state facility. The reinvestment considerations shall include:

- a. Actions to maintain acceptable mobility on the facility,
- b. Bicycle and pedestrian amenities,
- c. Signing, and
- d. Other urban design features.

Additionally, ODOT and the affected local governments shall determine roles and responsibilities for the maintenance needs of the bypassed facility.

**Application of the Policy**

This policy applies to all new bypasses, bypasses designated by the Oregon Transportation Commission, and the following existing bypasses:

- a. **Existing Bypasses not classified as Expressways**
  - 1) OR 47, Tualatin Valley Highway (MP 17.88- 20.4)
  - 2) OR 47, Nehalem Highway (MP 88.69-90.63)
  - 3) US 101, Oregon Coast Highway, Cannon Beach Section (MP 28.08-31.37)
  - 4) OR 126E, McKenzie Highway, Blue River Section (MP 39.68- 41.01)
  - 5) OR 126W, Florence-Eugene Highway, Noti Section (MP 40.78-42.29)
  - 6) OR 99W, Pacific Highway West, Corvallis Section (NW Elks Drive-NW Buchanan) (MP 80.73-82.95)
  - 7) US 199, Redwood Highway, Grants Pass Parkway (MP 0.35-0.25, Y-0.69 – Y-1.99)
  - 8) OR 42, Coos Bay-Roseburg Highway, bypass of Coquille (MP 9.68-12.13)

**b. Existing Bypasses also classified as Expressways**

- 9) OR 213, Cascade Highway South (I-205 – Mollala Avenue) (MP 0.00-3.59)
- 10) US 20, Corvallis-Newport Highway, Corvallis Bypass (MP 54.03- 56.8)
- 11) OR 18, Salmon River Highway, Willamina-Sheridan Section (MP 24.23-34.32)
- 12) OR 18, Salmon River Highway, McMinnville-Dayton Section (MP 43.75-52.65)
- 13) Beltline Highway (MP 3.10- 12.76)
- 14) Salem Parkway (MP 0.00- 3.16)
- 15) OR 126, Eugene-Springfield Highway (MP 0.00-9.97)
- 16) Bend Parkway (MP 134.76– 141.83)
- 17) OR 140, South Klamath Falls Highway (Green Springs Highway intersection to Klamath Falls-Malin Highway intersection) (MP 0.00-5.97)
- 18) US 97, The Dalles-California Highway (junction of Klamath Falls-Malin Highway to city limits) (MP 272.53-277.43)

The policy is also applicable to potential bypass plans and projects undergoing environmental assessment such as the Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project and the South Bend Refinement Plan.