

New Wording Is Underlined

(Policy 1C Background)

STATE HIGHWAY FREIGHT SYSTEM

Background

According to the 2002 Federal Highway Administration's Analysis Framework, trucks carried nearly 76 percent of the total freight tonnage and 82 percent of the total freight value for the year. To ensure that freight is able to move efficiently on the state's major trucking routes, this plan designates a State Highway Freight System. The key criteria of freight volume, tonnage, connectivity, and linkages to National Highway System intermodal facilities were augmented in the 2005 Freight Route designation update. Other factors that were considered included connectivity to regional freight routes and freight routes in other states, percent of trucks on state highways to reflect urban/rural characteristics, freight generating sites and the implications of highway segment designations.

The primary purpose of the State Highway Freight System is to facilitate efficient and reliable interstate, intrastate, and regional truck movement through a designated freight system. This freight system, made up of the Interstate Highways and certain Statewide, Regional and District Highways, the majority of which are on the National Highway System, includes routes that carry significant tonnage of freight by truck and serve as the primary interstate and intrastate highway freight connection to ports, intermodal terminals, and urban areas. It supersedes and replaces the designation of primary freight corridors in the Oregon Transportation Plan. Freight routes designated on Regional or District Highways will be managed according to their highway classification.

Freight depends upon timely and dependable movement of goods over the system; some industries structure their facilities and processes on just-in-time deliveries. Highway efficiency for goods movement in an expanding economy will require public and private investments in infrastructure as well as changes in road operations to reduce congestion on freight routes. Designating a network of freight routes of primary importance to the state will help ensure that these investments are coordinated in a way that reinforces the unique needs of the freight system.

Improving and maintaining the efficiency of highway operations requires balancing the needs of freight movement with the needs of other users of the highway system. Some state highways that are important goods movement corridors also serve as communities' main streets and may be designated as Special Transportation Areas. It may be the objective of local officials to reduce or slow traffic passing through the town, with potentially adverse impacts on long distance freight transportation. Therefore, a management plan will be developed that combines local land use planning needs while recognizing the special significance of the freight route designation. See Policy 1B which requires that STAs on Statewide Highways that are OHP Freight Routes include the development of a management plan approved by both ODOT and the local government. Improvements associated with designated freight routes will impact highway design elements such as roadway section widths, median barriers and intersection design. Statewide Freight Routes in general have higher mobility standards than other highways of the same classification. Regional and local jurisdictions may designate their own freight route systems, but these designations should be compatible with or complementary to the designation of routes in the State Highway Freight System.

The State Highway Freight System designation does not guarantee additional state investment in these routes. However, three special management strategies are available:

- Highways included in this designation have higher highway mobility standards than other Statewide Highways (see Policy 1F).
- The highway's function as a freight route should be balanced with local accessibility in Special Transportation Areas.
- Freight system routes may be treated as Expressways outside of urban growth boundaries and unincorporated communities. (See Action 1C.3 and the definition of Expressways in Action 1A.2.)

Policy 1C: State Highway Freight System

It is the policy of the State of Oregon to balance the need for movement of goods with other uses of the highway system, and to recognize the importance of maintaining efficient through movement on major truck freight routes.

Action 1C.1

Apply performance standards appropriate to the movement of freight on freight routes.

Action 1C.2

Prepare a statewide freight study to address the role of trucks and other freight modes in Oregon's economy, freight mobility and accessibility issues, current, near-term and long-term needs, and other topics.

Action 1C.3

In the development of corridor plans, work with local governments to examine options to:

- Treat designated freight routes as Expressways where the routes are outside of urban growth boundaries and unincorporated communities. Continue to treat freight routes as Expressways within urban growth boundaries where existing facilities are limited access or where corridor or transportation system plans indicate limited access; and
- Recognize and balance freight needs with needs for local circulation, safety and access in Special Transportation Areas.

Action 1C.4

Consider the importance of timeliness in freight movements in developing and implementing plans and projects on freight routes.

(Policy 4A Actions)

FREIGHT

Background

An efficient, safe, and environmentally sound system of moving goods through the state is an important economic development goal named in the Oregon Transportation Plan. The Plan also stresses the importance of promoting a balanced freight transportation system that takes advantage of the inherent efficiencies of each mode. For the highway system, this means both improving the efficiency with which motor carriers can operate and promoting alternative (non-highway) modes, where appropriate.

Improving and maintaining the efficiency of highway operations will require balancing the needs of goods movement with the needs of other users of the highway system. For example, some state highways that are important goods movement corridors also serve as communities' main streets.

Improving highway operational efficiency also involves working for more standardization in the areas of commercial vehicle regulations and Intelligent Transportation System technologies. Improving efficiency for goods movement will likely entail public and private investments in infrastructure, especially in an expanding economy. Oregon's Intermodal Management System (see page 23) is a key part of tracking the need for improvements to intermodal connections.

However, public policies or projects often have limited impact on outcomes such as mode split in freight transportation. Freight transportation patterns are a product of industry trends, the requirements of shippers, the quality, range of services, and rates provided by freight carriers, and other factors outside the public sector realm. The State should not attempt to subsidize one mode over another or otherwise interfere with the market for freight transportation, but should consider making investments in non-highway freight network improvements where doing so will benefit the efficiency of the state highway system.

There are sometimes specific infrastructure problems, bottlenecks, or regulations that pose a barrier to efficiency or exacerbate trends that would be detrimental to the highway system. For example, it is important to maintain a viable deep

draft and shallow draft water freight system on the Columbia River to prevent increased congestion on major highway freight routes. Shortages of rail equipment and lack of access to capital may pose a barrier to the increased use of shortline rail for bulk commodity movements. In these cases, public policies and actions should aim to mitigate physical and institutional obstacles and promote safety while avoiding undue meddling in the marketplace. The following policy and actions pertaining to freight transportation and the highway system were developed to be consistent with this philosophy.

Policy 4A: Efficiency of Freight Movement

It is the policy of the State of Oregon to maintain and improve the efficiency of freight movement on the state highway system and access to intermodal connections. The State shall seek to balance the needs of long distance and through freight movements with local transportation needs on highway facilities in both urban areas and rural communities.

Action 4A.1

Identify roadway obstacles and barriers to efficient truck movements on state highways, especially the Statewide Freight System. These include bridges with load limits and geometric constraints that prohibit the travel of legal size vehicles. Set up a process through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program to systematically improve the highway segments that hinder or prevent freight movements and utilize benefits/cost analysis to determine whether improvements are warranted.

Action 4A.2

Encourage uniform commercial vehicle regulations at the regional and national levels where the safety and efficiency of Oregon's transportation system will benefit. These might include regulation regarding vehicle design.

Action 4A.3

Support further development, standardization, and/or compatibility of Intelligent Transportation System Commercial Vehicle Operation technology in the western United States.

Action 4A.4

Maintain and improve roadway facilities serving intermodal freight facilities that are part of Oregon's Intermodal Management System, and support development of new intermodal roadway facilities where they are part of a local or regional transportation system plan. Recognize National Highway System Intermodal connectors as part of the freight network in transportation planning and funding considerations. Manage state-owned Intermodal connectors according to their state highway classification as Regional or District Highways.

Action 4A.5

Support the establishment of stable funding or financing sources for transportation systems that will benefit the efficiency of freight movement on the highway system. These transportation systems include non-highway freight modes and intermodal connectors.

Action 4A.6

Work with the private sector (e.g., carriers, shippers), local governments, metropolitan planning organizations, port authorities and others to improve planning coordination between public investments in highways and other investments in the freight movement infrastructure.

Action 4A.7

Support the maintenance and improvement of non-highway infrastructure that provides alternative freight-moving capacity in critical corridors where doing so will maintain or improve the overall performance of the highway system.

Action 4A.8

Recognize that local truck routes are important linkages in the movement of freight throughout the state. ODOT will consider requests to establish local government designated truck routes that will serve to detour trucks off the state highway system. ODOT will coordinate with local jurisdictions when designating, managing and constructing a project on a local freight route.

Action 4A.9

Develop an amendment process for the identification of additional routes or modifications to the State Highway Freight System.