Chapter 1. Project Purpose and Need

This chapter describes the Newberg Dundee Bypass (Bypass) project, its location, background, and Purpose and Need. This chapter also gives an overview of what is included in this Tier 2 Final Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 2 FEIS).

1.1 THE PROJECT

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are proposing to build the Bypass, an 11-mile, four-lane access-controlled expressway around the cities of Newberg and Dundee, in Yamhill County, Oregon. The project will reduce congestion on Oregon 99W through Newberg and Dundee by allowing traffic to redirect to the Bypass and improving the overall flow of traffic through this area. The Bypass will also make the downtown areas of Newberg and Dundee safer and more enjoyable places for pedestrians.

The project will be located along the south sides of Newberg and Dundee, extending from the Oregon 99W/Oregon 18 junction near Dayton (Oregon 18 approximately mile point 51.6) to just past the top of Rex Hill, east of Newberg (Oregon 99W approximately mile point 19.6). Most of the project will be located in Yamhill County, but about 1000 feet extends east of Newberg along Oregon 99W into Washington County (see Figure PA 1.1-1).

The project will include the alignment (the specific location) of the Bypass and four interchanges, as well as required changes to local streets that will be relocated to accommodate the Bypass. The four interchanges will provide access to and from the Bypass and will be located one at each end of the Bypass and at two intermediate locations in Newberg and Dundee.
The interchanges are:

- **Dayton Interchange:** Located at the Oregon 99W/Oregon 18 junction, just north of Dayton.
- **East Dundee Interchange** (and connector road): Located between Dundee and Newberg.
- **Oregon 219 Interchange:** Located at the south edge of the Newberg urban growth boundary (UGB) on Oregon 219.
- **East Newberg Interchange:** Located on the east side of Newberg at Rex Hill.

## 1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND AND NEPA PROCESS

ODOT is conducting the project under a tiered National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The NEPA process may be carried out in two stages or *tiers*. The Tier 1 process addressed big-picture issues associated with the project and evaluated impacts based on general project information. The Tier 2 process focuses on the specific alignment of the project, with a detailed investigation of project impacts and ways to avoid, minimize, or provide proposed mitigation for adverse impacts.

ODOT started the Tier 1 process for the project in January 2000. Tier 1 considered the benefits and impacts of alternative corridors for the Bypass around Newberg and Dundee, and identified proposed mitigation measures for adverse impacts.

Tier 1 concluded in 2005 when FHWA issued a Record of Decision (ROD) on the Tier 1 FEIS. The ROD explains FHWA's decision to advance a Build Alternative for the project to Tier 2, and identifies the Modified 3J Corridor, defined in Tier 1 as the Bypass Approved Corridor (Corridor), where the project will be located (see Figure PA 1.1-1).

At the beginning of the Tier 2 process, ODOT intended to have the entire project stay within the Corridor. However, as the project design evolved, it became necessary to place small parts of the Bypass outside of the Corridor due to environmental, engineering, and safety constraints, such as the need to avoid impacts to wetlands and historic resources. In addition, ODOT did not evaluate local roads disrupted by the Bypass in the Tier 1 process that are now included in the Tier 2 process. Many of these relocated streets, as well as some interchange area, also lie partially outside of the Corridor. The Corridor and additional areas outside of the Corridor are now included in the Tier 2 Preferred Alternative (see Figure PA 1.2-1).

As an early step in the Tier 2 process, FHWA completed a reevaluation of the Tier 1 FEIS. This reevaluation examined the changes in existing conditions and the refinements and details, including new areas outside of the Corridor added to the proposed project since the release of the Tier 1 FEIS. The reevaluation confirmed that the Tier 1 FEIS ROD, which identified the Corridor as the location for the proposed project, continues to be valid. FHWA concluded that a supplemental NEPA document for the Tier 1 FEIS was not required.
Figure PA 1.2-1 Preferred Alternative

- Preferred Alternative
- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary (UGB)

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Figure PA 1.2-1 Preferred Alternative

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1.3 TIER 2 DEIS OVERVIEW

The Tier 2 DEIS was prepared to help the public and decision makers understand the environmental consequences of the project alternatives. It focused on the alignment of the Bypass and presented information on the following:

- Existing conditions in the project area
- No Build Alternative
- Build Alternative with design and local circulation options
- Potential impacts of the project alternatives including the design and local circulation options
- Proposed mitigation and conservation measures

The Tier 2 DEIS was released for public review in June 2010. The Tier 2 DEIS included ODOT’s Recommended Alternative for the project. During the public comment period for the Tier 2 DEIS (June 4 to July 19, 2010), the public and agencies had the opportunity to provide comments at a public hearing or in writing. For information on the public hearing, see Chapter 5, Public and Agency Involvement. Copies of the written comments, responses and a transcript of the public hearing testimony are included in Appendix N.

After reviewing the comments on the Tier 2 DEIS and after considering the tradeoffs between the alternatives and options as disclosed in the Tier 2 DEIS, a Preferred Alternative was identified. FHWA completed a re-evaluation of the Tier 2 DEIS, prior to publishing the Tier 2 FEIS, to consider if the impacts from Phase 1 were of the level of significance that would require a supplemental DEIS. The re-evaluation concluded that a supplemental Tier 2 DEIS was not needed, because there were no new significant impacts.

1.4 WHAT IS THE TIER 2 FEIS?

This Tier 2 FEIS includes a description of and impact analysis for the No Build Alternative, the Preferred Alternative (see Figure PA 1.2-1) and Phase 1 of the Preferred Alternative (Phase 1) (see Figure PA 1.4-1), as well as information presented in the Tier 2 DEIS for the Build Alternative and its options. New information in the Tier 2 FEIS includes:

- The Preferred Alternative.
- Project construction phasing and Phase 1.
- Updated affected environment, environmental consequences and mitigation measures for the Preferred Alternative and Phase 1.
- Required permits for the Preferred Alternative.
- Documentation of substantive comments made on the Tier 2 DEIS during the comment period and ODOT’s and FHWA’s responses to those comments.
Figure PA 1.4-1 Preferred Alternative and Phase 1 of the Preferred Alternative

Note: Phase 1 of the Bypass will include one lane in each direction.
1.5 LEAD AGENCIES FOR THE TIER 2 NEPA PROCESS

FHWA and ODOT are lead agencies for the Tier 2 NEPA process for the proposed project. On August 10, 2005, Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) was passed, and this project is being processed under this law as well as other requirements of Title 23 and 23 Code of Federal Regulations. FHWA is a joint lead agency and the federal lead agency because it administers and directs the use of federal funds in Oregon for the proposed project. ODOT, acting on behalf of FHWA, conducts the day-to-day project management. Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU requires that federal, state and local agencies that have jurisdiction by law or a special interest in a project have the chance to formally participate in the project’s environmental review process. See Chapter 5 and Appendix M for additional information on SAFETEA-LU 6002 compliance.

1.5.1 Decision Authority

FHWA is the decision-making authority that approves the Preferred Alternative through a Tier 2 ROD. As FHWA considers that decision, it is important that the public and interested agencies have access to the same information and understand how the proposed project could affect their communities and the environment.

1.6 PURPOSE AND NEED

1.6.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Newberg Dundee Bypass project is to improve mobility and safety for interregional highway traffic through Newberg and Dundee and to relieve congestion by reducing truck and passenger vehicle traffic on Oregon 99W in these communities.

1.6.2 Need

The following discussion gives details on the need for the Newberg Dundee Bypass.

Over the past two decades, traffic on Oregon 99W in the downtowns of Newberg and Dundee has increased by over 40 percent. Vehicle backup on Oregon 99W often stretches for more than a mile in both directions on weekdays and weekends. This congestion blocks turning movements and access across Oregon 99W and creates an unfriendly and unhealthy environment for residents, shoppers, and tourists using the downtown areas and for people who need to cross Oregon 99W to get from one side of town to the other. Traffic congestion and travel delays have now reached unacceptable levels for those who live, work in, or travel through Newberg, Dundee and the surrounding areas. By 2035, Newberg and Dundee are expected to have congestion in their downtowns for more than 14 hours a day.

The 2005 peak westbound period travel time between East Newberg and Dayton was over 30 minutes. If the proposed project is not constructed, the westbound travel time in 2035 is forecast to be over 50 minutes on Oregon 99W. When the new Bypass is constructed, the travel time between East Newberg and Dayton on Oregon 99W is forecast to be 21 minutes, and the travel time on the Bypass is likely to be 12 minutes.

ODOT uses volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratios to measure the levels of mobility on state highways. The ratios show the volume of traffic over the capacity of the highway to...
handle traffic. When the ratio approaches 1.0, the entire capacity of the highway is being used, and the highway is very congested. At this point, even minor disruptions in flow can cause severe backups. The v/c ratios for most of the major intersections on Oregon 99W in Newberg and Dundee will exceed 1.0 in 2035 during peak travel periods. ODOT's policy and the goal set by the Project Oversight Steering Team for urban highways is a v/c ratio of 0.75.

Newberg and Dundee would like to make their downtowns more pedestrian friendly. Noise levels measured on the sidewalk in Newberg in 2002 were found to be 72 decibels. This is loud enough to require people to raise their voices to converse. The heavy truck traffic through town is the source of most of this noise. Truck traffic also adds to the unacceptable levels of congestion in the towns. Unless a bypass is constructed, by 2035, Dundee is forecast to have about 3,200 freight trips per day, and Newberg is forecast to have 4,100 freight trips per day.

1.6.3 Objectives

Objectives are results the project is striving to achieve. For the proposed project, the objectives are as follows:

- Avoid direct impacts to sensitive resources in the Corridor to the extent practicable.
- Mitigate for the direct and indirect impacts of the proposed project on wetlands, riparian areas, and wildlife habitats by:
  - Providing permanent protection (through land acquisition and/or conservation easements), restoration, and enhancement of the Willamette River floodplains and tributaries in the vicinity of the proposed project.
  - Providing permanent protection (through land acquisition and/or conservation easements), restoration, and enhancement of riparian areas, wetlands, and wildlife habitat associated with the streams and rivers in the vicinity of the proposed project.
  - Proposing a stabilization strategy for the banks of project-affected rivers and creeks using geomorphological analyses and bioengineering to minimize unwanted channelization and encourage natural stream-forming processes.
  - Using the available programmatic standards in designing stream crossings and following Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife fish passage requirements for all existing and new bridges and culverts associated with the proposed project.
  - Restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife crossings at existing fish and wildlife road barriers (locations given in the Biological Resources section of Chapter 3) within the footprint of the proposed project, including Oregon 99W.
  - Providing adequate stormwater treatment (water quality, quantity, and seasonality) and erosion control during project-related construction and prior to post-construction stormwater runoff being discharged into the Willamette River floodplains and tributaries in the proposed project area.
- Coordinate proposed mitigation efforts with other agencies and groups to maximize the protection and enhancement of all riparian areas.
- Minimize adverse noise impacts.
- Avoid and/or minimize impacts to cultural resources (archaeological and historic) along the Corridor.
- Improve overall livability and economic viability along the Oregon 99W and Oregon 18 corridors in the proposed project area.
- Provide for safe and efficient movement of freight within the Corridor.
- Minimize impacts to businesses and residents in the proposed project area.
- Encourage opportunities for economic development in the proposed project area consistent with the local jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan policies.
- Develop solutions to the problems within the Corridor that allow for cost-effective design and construction phasing relative to overall project funding and to meet the goals and objectives for the design of the proposed project.
- Concurrently develop the plans for alternative modes (including transit, bicycle and pedestrian plans) and the interchange area management plans for Newberg and Dundee.
- Meet the requirements of the goal exception adopted by Yamhill County in Ordinances 748 and 750 by:
  - Operating existing Oregon 99W at a v/c ratio of no greater than 0.85 after the Bypass is constructed.
  - Reducing freight trips in downtown Newberg to less than 975 average daily trips, and in downtown Dundee to less than 1,250 average daily trips.
  - Not widening Oregon 99W in downtown Dundee to five or more lanes.
  - Managing existing Oregon 99W through Dundee in a manner consistent with its adopted community vision.
  - Not constructing additional at-grade crossings with the railroad.
  - Designing the interchange areas to address local circulation and local planning issues.
  - Designing the Bypass facility to ensure that farm vehicles and equipment can reasonably get around and under the Bypass roadway, including a connection between the east and west sides of the Dundee Farm owned and operated by Columbia Empire Farms.

1.7 AVAILABILITY OF THIS TIER 2 FEIS

ODOT distributed this Tier 2 FEIS to agencies, tribes, other interested parties and all persons and agencies that submitted substantive comments on the Tier 2 DEIS. The document is available to citizens at public locations, on the project Web site, and by request from ODOT.

To learn more about the project, you can visit the project Web site at http://www.NewbergDundee.org. The Notice of Availability at the beginning of this document identifies where this Tier 2 FEIS is available for review.

1.8 NEXT STEPS IN THE NEPA PROCESS

After publication of this Tier 2 FEIS, FHWA will issue a ROD no earlier than 30 days from the availability of the FEIS. The ROD will provide FHWA’s decision on the project. FHWA’s signature of the ROD will complete the NEPA decision-making process for the project.