

CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION

GOAL 12: TRANSPORTATION

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Albany's location and transportation facilities provide excellent advantages for commerce and economic development. Albany's central location on Interstate 5, Oregon's major north-south freeway, places it in the midst of a large market area. Within a 100-mile drive, there is a population of 2.2 million people. Very few communities in the Northwest have the potential to provide goods and services to this large of a market. US Highway 20 and State Route 99E also run through Albany. These roadway facilities provide Albany with direct connections to the Oregon Coast, the Cascade Mountains, and to other portions of the Willamette Valley.

There are also excellent commercial transportation services to and from Albany. The city is located along major railroad lines that link the city with east/west and north/south freight destinations. Passenger service also operates through Albany along the north/south corridor. Eight truck freight lines provide regular service to the Albany area. Eastbound freight connects to Interstate 84 at Portland where expanded rail service allows linkage with national markets.

The ports of Portland and Newport and the Portland International Airport are within a two-hour drive. Also, the Eugene airport, which handles national air traffic, provides additional passenger service opportunities. These additional transportation resources give the Albany area an opportunity to sell goods and services to the international market.

In 1997, the City of Albany and consultants Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. completed a Transportation System Plan (TSP). Field data collection for the TSP began in September 1994 and was completed by the end of the year. The TSP was adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in June 1997. The TSP describes Albany's existing transportation system and identifies projects needed now and in the future to improve the system.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION TYPES

Albany's local transportation system consists of more than just streets. The Transportation System Plan describes a system which includes streets, freeway interchanges, transit systems, bikeways, pedestrian ways, the municipal airport, and railroads. The following summarizes some of the information found in the TSP. The entire TSP has been adopted as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan.

STREETS

Street Capacity

Between September and November, 1994, 24-hour daily traffic volume levels on Albany streets were surveyed at more than 125 locations. In addition, evening peak hour (i.e. 4:00 - 6:00 PM) traffic movements were counted at more than 60 of Albany's busiest intersections. When compared with daily traffic volumes collected in 1984 and 1985, traffic levels have grown significantly. At other locations, traffic volumes dropped by more than 10% on some streets, and increased by over 80% on other streets. Although traffic volumes generally do not decrease, locations that experienced a traffic reduction were typically located near new street connections which have attracted away some of the traffic, such as the Waverly Street extension in south Albany. Streets that experienced high traffic growth were frequently near land uses that have developed within the last decade. Typically traffic has grown between 2% and 5% per year, thus creating additional demand on the existing streets and intersections.

A computer model known as the EMME/2 model was used to forecast future traffic volumes on the collector and arterial street system. Overall results of the forecast showed that traffic would typically increase between 40% to

50% over the next twenty years. In some cases, the increase in traffic was over 100% as a result of new development, such as in North Albany and east of Interstate 5. The forecasted traffic volumes were used as the basis for analysis of the existing roadway network. In 1994, all of the streets evaluated in the TSP were operating under capacity in terms of volume of traffic. However, by 2015 some street segments are expected to operate at or above capacity.

Another measurement of street capacity is expressed in terms of “level of service.” Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative rating of the effectiveness of a roadway to serve traffic, in terms of operating conditions. LOS ranges from A to F. LOS A generally describes traffic conditions with low volumes, low delay and high travel speeds, while LOS F describes traffic conditions with high volumes, high delays, and low travel speeds. The City and State have identified LOS D as the acceptable level of service for street intersections during the twenty year planning period. The TSP identifies intersections which have levels of service of less than “D” now, and those expected to operate at less than “D” in the future if no improvements are made.

Structural Condition

A visual rating of the condition of Albany’s collector and arterial streets was conducted for the TSP. The results of the rating were combined with existing information, including the Street Maintenance Task Force Report (1996), to identify streets with poor pavement condition. The results of the rating indicated that approximately 14% of arterial streets and 19% of collector streets have a poor pavement rating.

Thirty different collector and arterial streets without curb and gutter were identified during the data collection process. The majority of the streets are located in North Albany, east of Interstate 5, and in areas of south Albany. Although the TSP does not include local streets, the Task Force Report included a list of local streets that require reconstruction, rehabilitation, and/or overlays. These local streets should be considered a high priority existing need and a funding strategy should be developed.

Freeway Interchanges

There are two freeway interchanges in the City of Albany.

The Santiam Highway interchange is located at the intersection of I-5 and Santiam Highway and is a partial cloverleaf design. Airport Road and Spicer Drive intersect opposite the ramp terminals and numerous private driveways are located in close proximity. The interchange currently operates at level of service C.

The Knox Butte interchange is located at the intersection of I-5 and Highway 99E (Pacific Boulevard). The interchange is designed to provide free flow movement from southbound I-5 to 99E and from 99E to northbound I-5. The interchange currently operates at LOS D. Although the interchange is geographically large, it does not provide all traffic movements. Drivers who want to travel south on I-5 must use the Santiam interchange to get on the freeway.

Within 20 years, LOS problems are expected at both interchanges due to high traffic growth. Streets on either side of both interchanges will fall to LOS E and F. Aside from the interchanges, Interstate 5 will also have operational problems. Both of the interchanges will need to be modified to function adequately during the 20 year planning horizon. Drawings in the TSP show how the interchanges could be modified to accommodate future traffic volumes. These improvements will require cooperation between the City of Albany and the Oregon Department of Transportation.

Other Elements of the TSP

The TSP also includes sections that discuss functional class of arterials and collectors, transportation system management, transportation demand management, right-of-way preservation, access management, truck routes, and water, and pipeline transport. No projects are recommended for air, water, and pipeline transportation.

The TSP should be used as a reference in all transportation planning activities that involve facilities within the City of Albany UGB and adjacent areas included in the TSP study area.

North Albany Local Street Plan

In June 1995, the City of Albany and consultants Kimley-Horn completed a local street plan for North Albany. The planning process included an extensive public involvement program, including meetings with individuals and small groups. Plan development included the collection of data on the existing land use and transportation system, from which future growth was estimated. From the growth in population and employment, additional vehicle trips were calculated and assigned to the North Albany transportation system. The impacts of the traffic were used to develop a new street alignment plan that best meets the objectives of the Transportation Planning Rule and other objectives. Cost estimates for the future system were prepared, as were street design standards and street connectivity policies. The standards and policies are intended to guide new development. The North Albany Local Street System Plan was adopted in June 1997 by the Planning Commission and City Council as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan. Street connectivity policies are included in the Comprehensive Plan under the North Albany Site of Special Interest in the Comprehensive Plan.

TRANSIT

Several Transit services operate within the City of Albany, including Albany Transit Service (ATS), Linn-Benton Loop, Call-A-Ride/ADA Service, Linn County Shuttle, Valley Retriever, and Greyhound Service. Only the ATS, the Linn-Benton Loop, and Call-A-Ride are operated by the City. The remaining transit services have routes that pass through the Albany area but are operated by other jurisdictions. The TSP includes a transit plan, which identifies van pool programs, bus pass programs, transit design guidelines, and eventual creation of a regional transit agency as future projects. This information should be referenced for planning new transit programs and projects.

Albany Transit Service

Albany Transit Service currently operates two routes within the City limits. Drawings in the TSP show the existing transit system and the future transit system. The future system includes seven routes by the year 2015.

Linn-Benton Loop

Linn Benton Loop operates a bus route between Albany and Corvallis. The route connects the Albany AMTRAK station, the downtown City Hall area of Albany, the park-and-ride facility at North Albany Road, then travels via Highway 20 to Highway 99 West, and then into the downtown Corvallis area. The Loop is completed via travel on Highway 34 and SR 99E back into the Albany area, that includes a stop at Linn-Benton Community College (LBCC).

Call-A-Ride/ADA Service

Besides fixed route service, Albany provides curb to curb service to seniors and to persons with disabilities through the Call-a-Ride program. Recent and future expansion of service in response to the 1991 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is required to match the paratransit service area and hours of operation with those of the fixed route service.

Other Transit Services

The Linn County Shuttle is a system primarily oriented to serving the elderly and handicapped population with routes between Sweet Home, Lebanon, and Albany. The Valley Retriever is a privately owned transit company providing service between Newport and Bend with stops in Albany and Corvallis. Greyhound passenger and freight service to other Oregon communities along I-5 is provided from Albany with connections to the Albany Transit Service.

BIKEWAYS

The City of Albany has developed and maintained several miles of bicycle facilities within the city limits since the early 1970's. The City's first comprehensive bicycle route plan was adopted in 1973 and updated in 1980 and was incorporated into the Albany Comprehensive Plan. The 1997 Master Bikeway element of the TSP proposes development of a bikeway system throughout the Urban Growth Boundary. Bicycle transportation offers

numerous advantages to a community including reduced automobile use, increased energy efficiency, air quality benefits, a balanced transportation system, as well as providing a relatively inexpensive transportation mode.

Nearly all of Albany's existing bikeways are on-street, either through the use of striped lanes on streets with curb and gutters or through wide shoulders on streets without curb and gutters. Albany has few off-street bikeways. Some major streets in Albany have bikeways, but many are not continuous and do not connect with bikeways on other cross streets.

In general, most existing bike lanes are in fair or good condition. The poorest sections are located in North Albany, on Gibson Hill Road, as well as a short section on Quarry Road. Bikeways that are in fair condition include Salem Avenue, Santiam Road, and sections in North Albany.

The Albany Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a 10-year guide for the development of the city park and open space system. The Plan contains numerous trail corridors between major recreation sites and activity areas. The trails can be used by both bikes and pedestrians. Many of the corridors correspond with existing roadways, others correspond with future roadway alignments, and some trails would be along their own alignments. Trails that correspond with streets corridors can be incorporated in the design.

Existing bikeway needs, future bikeway needs, and the future bike network are shown on drawings included in the TSP. The TSP also includes a bicycle plan, which lists on-street bike lanes, shared bikeways on low volume collector streets, and some off-street paths as future projects. This information should be referenced for planning new transit programs and projects.

PEDESTRIAN WAYS

There are sidewalks along most major arterial streets in the central areas of Albany, with a few exceptions. Drawings in the TSP show the existing sidewalks and locations where sidewalks are missing along collector and arterial streets. Most of the gaps in the system of sidewalks are in North, East, and South Albany. Generally, sidewalk conditions range from fair to good.

The lack of sidewalks can be a particular safety problem for children. Fortunately, nearly all Albany schools have sidewalks along the primary walking routes to the schools; however, there are no existing sidewalks near North Albany Middle School, and this presents a danger to the students who must walk along the busy North Albany Road. Other Albany schools that do not have sidewalks along the primary routes to the school grounds include: North Albany Elementary School and Oak Grove School. Oak Grove School is outside of the Urban Growth Boundary but is attended by students living in the North Albany area.

Existing pedestrian needs, future pedestrian needs, and the future pedestrian network are shown on drawings included in the TSP. The TSP also includes a pedestrian plan, which lists repair of sidewalks in poor condition, constructing missing sidewalk links, and sidewalks on all new streets as future projects. The plan also includes important bike/pedestrian connectors to reduce pedestrian trip lengths between neighborhoods and major activity centers as future projects. This information should be referenced for planning new pedestrian facilities.

MUNICIPAL AIRPORT

The Albany Municipal Airport has been in its present location since 1930. It is located in the northeast part of the city between Knox Butte Road and Santiam Highway, directly east of Interstate 5. The airport provides aircraft parking aprons and limited hangar and terminal facilities. Because of the airport's short runway and lack of navigational facilities, it has served primarily as a base for local pilots. Most corporate business flights whose passengers have Albany as their destination utilize the Corvallis Airport, which has better navigational facilities, passenger accommodations, and a much longer runway.

A study was recently completed to determine the future of the Albany Airport. Although this study did not reach any decisive conclusions regarding the need for and/or location of a regional airport, several conclusions were drawn regarding the Albany Municipal Airport. Because the closure or relocation of the airport has been subject to periodic study and consideration, long-term investment in the airport has been restricted. In addition, non-compatible uses have encroached into the airport area. The airport is too physically constrained to allow significant runway extension and improved all-weather landing capabilities are impractical. The report recommends that the City do additional study to determine the future of the airport.

RAILROADS

The City of Albany is located along major railroad lines that link the city with east/west and north/south freight destinations. Passenger service also operates through Albany along the north/south corridor.

Albany is served by four rail freight carriers: Union Pacific/Southern Pacific (UPSP), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Willamette and Pacific (W&P), and Willamette Valley. Each carrier serves a different geographic area and purpose. UPSP is the major railroad, providing north/south connections through the Albany/Millersburg area and typically runs 10 trains per day through the area. BNSF currently provides freight service through Albany and Millersburg to Sweet Home and to Eugene. BNSF runs approximately one train per day to each destination. W&P provides short haul service for valley businesses to the UPSP and BNSF mainline railroads. W&P typically runs 4 trains per day through Albany but is planning to expand its service. Willamette Valley also provides short haul service for valley businesses with one train per day to Lebanon.

Amtrak passenger service also serves the Albany area. Currently there are two northbound and two southbound trains per day, as well as Thruway Bus service which replicates Amtrak service in the valley. The trains stop at the historic Southern Pacific/Amtrak station to board passengers from Albany, Corvallis, and other nearby communities. The only bus service to the rail station is the Linn-Benton Loop but it does not have a schedule that is compatible with the rail schedules; therefore, most rail passengers drive to the station. In order to serve the rail station, transit service hours of the ATS or Loop would need to be considerably extended and coordinated with the arrivals/departures.

Currently, there are deficiencies at and around the existing Amtrak rail station, which has been identified as the recommended high-speed rail stop for the Albany-Corvallis area. An analysis of the building in 1993 indicated that repairs are needed to both the interior and exterior of the building, including improvements to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The building lacks ADA facilities such as rest rooms, water fountains, doors, stairs, parking, and service counters. On-site traffic circulation is poor and is sometimes obstructed by vehicles waiting in front of the station for passengers. Due to the need to upgrade the facility, a federal grant application has been submitted to fund the creation of a multimodal transportation center at the station.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The City of Albany Transportation System Plan and the North Albany Local Street System Plan have been both been adopted as supporting documents to the Comprehensive Plan. The information presented above summarizes some of the data included in the TSP and the North Albany Local Street System Plan, but the both plans go further in evaluating the existing transportation system and proposing projects to solve current system problems and accommodate future growth. The TSP includes a list of proposed projects, prioritizes the order in which the projects should be built, and suggests methods of providing construction financing. Both plans provide an important source of more detailed information about Albany's existing and future transportation system. The TSP should be used in planning all future transportation facilities within Albany's Urban Growth Boundary and within adjacent areas included in the TSP study area. The North Albany Local Street System Plan should be used in planning local streets in North Albany.

[Ord. 5307, 8/13/1997]

GOAL 12: TRANSPORTATION

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL

Provide a safe, diversified, economical, and efficient transportation system that protects and enhances Albany's economy, environment, neighborhood quality, cultural, and scenic values. For the purposes of this document, a transportation system includes auto, transit, bicycles, pedestrian, rail and air transportation.

POLICIES

1. When planning for, designing, and providing transportation systems:
 - a. Coordinate the requirements of the various transportation types with each other and minimize operational and safety conflicts.
 - b. Coordinate proposed projects with impacted agencies and businesses and applicable neighboring cities, county, state, and federal agencies.
 - c. Notify and coordinate with affected agencies regarding the transportation impacts of proposed development within or adjacent to the Urban Growth Boundary.
2. Protect transportation facilities, corridors, and sites for their identified functions.
 - a. Develop access control measures and encourage land development patterns that minimize direct access onto collector and arterial roads.
 - b. Develop a roadway system that appropriately allocates on-street parking to manage traffic on arterial, collector and local streets.
 - c. Protect the future operation of corridors by obtaining sufficient right-of-way or building setbacks to provide for future capacity in transportation corridors and by conditioning development proposals to minimize impacts.
 - d. Review land use designations, densities, and design standards for consistency with the functions, capacities, and levels of service of facilities identified in the TSP.
 - e. Negotiate a means to transfer ownership of county roads that are within the city limits of Albany. Coordinate with the county for the construction, right-of-way-acquisition, improvement or repair of any county road within the city limits or within a 1/4 mile of the Urban Growth Boundary for improvements recommended in the TSP.
3. Develop a roadway system that is efficient and safe for the traveling public while preserving neighborhood quality and character.
4. Develop a transportation system, encourage land use patterns and design standards, and promote transportation projects, programs, and policies which reduce dependency on the automobile and encourage alternatives such as public transit, bicycling, walking, car and van pools.
 - a. Require new and existing development, through building and site design measures, to address the needs of those who use alternate transportation modes such as public transit, bicycles, walking, and wheelchairs.
5. Develop a transit/paratransit system that promotes ridership by serving a large number of potential users, and provides the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to use public transportation services.
6. Promote a transit/paratransit system that identifies future alternative fuel options that are clean, renewable, and cost-efficient.

7. Support local and area-wide public transit/paratransit including:
 - a. Operation and improvement of the Albany Transit System to meet Albany's transit needs.
 - b. Efforts to maintain regional bus systems whose services are coordinated with the Albany system, such as the Linn-Benton Loop System and the Sweet Home-Albany-Lebanon route.
8. Develop an adequately connected bicycle and pedestrian system to encourage bicycling and walking as alternative modes of transportation.
9. Develop safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian routes, facilities, and improvements which are reasonably free from hazards (particularly automobile traffic that would discourage these modes for short trips), provide a direct route of travel between destinations such as a transit stop and a store, and meet travel needs (destination and length of trip) of cyclists and pedestrians.
 - a. Provide bikeways on arterial and collector streets as well as appropriate separated bike facilities.
 - b. Develop a pedestrian system that provides the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to use the pedestrian system.
10. Support the development of high and higher speed rail facilities or other passenger rail programs including the existing train station site and structures.
11. Maintain safe and efficient automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle railway crossings.
 - a. Monitor the performance of existing railroad crossings and work with the Oregon Department of Transportation Rail Safety Division and railroad companies to evaluate the need for new crossings, eliminating existing crossings, and to upgrade existing crossings to improve public safety and convenience.
12. Coordinate with the Oregon Department of Transportation Rail Safety Division and railroad companies to ensure that rail traffic does not impede the smooth and safe flow of vehicular traffic.
13. Support the development of airport services that serve the needs of the community.
14. Support the coordination of interstate and regional utilities.

[Ord. 5307, 8/13/1997]

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The City of Albany Transportation System Plan prepared by the City of Albany and consultants Kimley-Horn and Associates, dated June 1997, is adopted in its entirety as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan.
2. The North Albany Transportation System Plan prepared by the City of Albany and consultants Kimley-Horn and Associates, dated June 30, 1995 is adopted in its entirety as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan.

[Ord. 5307, 8/13/1997]