



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Transportation

Office of the Director, MS 11

355 Capitol St NE

Salem, OR 97301-3871

DATE: July 2, 2013

TO: Oregon Transportation Commission

FROM: Matthew L. Garrett
Director

SUBJECT: **Consent 5** – Special Transportation Area (STA) designation in downtown Albany, Albany-Corvallis Highway (State Highway 31; U.S. 20), Roadway 1 Milepoints 10.57-11.10; Roadway 2 Milepoints 10.58-10.99; Connector 031AB Milepoints 11.07-11.10 and Connector 058AH Milepoints 2.71-2.74

Requested Action:

Request approval to amend the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) to designate a Special Transportation Area (STA) on the Albany-Corvallis Highway (U.S. 20; State Highway 31 with Connectors 031AB and 058AH) in downtown Albany.

Background:

U.S. 20 is routed through downtown Albany on one-way streets, Ellsworth and Lyon Avenues, and Ninth Street. Two travel lanes are in each direction. The Albany bridges across the Willamette River connect to Ellsworth and Lyon Avenues. Ninth Street links southbound highway traffic on Ellsworth Avenue to the Oregon 99E/U.S. 20 Interchange. At the south end of the couplet, Connector 031AB and Connector 058AH complete the circulation system by providing access to adjoining retail businesses, surrounding a triangular pedestrian island formed by the roadways and providing sidewalks and crosswalks linked to Albany Multimodal Center and Amtrak Rail Station. The highway posted speed through downtown is 25 mph.

Downtown Albany fits the OHP's characterization of an existing STA. The area consists of several blocks of two- and three-story buildings located adjacent to the sidewalk. Several buildings on the highway are included in one of Albany's National Register Historic Districts. Most buildings in downtown are adjacent to the sidewalk, and pedestrians enter many stores, businesses, governmental buildings and residences from entrances on the highway or on intersection corners. Albany City Hall, the Linn County Courthouse, other governmental offices and the Albany Regional Museum are on the highway. Alleys are midblock. Parallel parking is located on the sections of highway on Ellsworth and Lyon Avenues and on all of the city streets. Special zoning districts apply in downtown Albany to retain the traditional downtown, pedestrian-oriented development pattern in the area. Recent development in the downtown area has constructed new multistory buildings.



Pedestrian movements across U.S. 20 occur at the eight signalized intersections and at other unsignalized streets. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) improved pedestrian travel within the proposed STA area by constructing sidewalk bulb-outs at four intersections during 2002, and a pedestrian island at the Lyon Avenue/9th Street intersection during 2004. The pedestrian island improved pedestrian movements between the downtown and the Albany Multimodal/Amtrak Train Station. Sidewalks along the highway are 8-12-foot wide or are separated from travel lanes by landscaping/buffer strips.

ODOT proposed an STA designation during 2003 and again in 2005, but Albany decided that an update of its Transportation Systems Plan (TSP) should be completed before considering an STA designation. Modeling for the TSP update showed that the current highway would meet the OHP mobility target if an STA is designated, but without the STA designation could only meet the existing mobility target by adding travel lanes and eliminating on-street parking from the highway. The TSP update adopted by the Albany City Council does not call for additional travel lanes in downtown. The Albany City Council has adopted a resolution supporting STA designation (Attachment 2). The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development has acknowledged the TSP as meeting that agency's transportation planning requirements. Attachment 3 is a map showing the STA area. Draft findings of fact and conclusions show that STA designation is consistent with the OHP, the provisions of the Statewide Planning Goals and pertinent Oregon Administrative Rules (Attachment 1).

The capacity of the Albany-Corvallis Highway will not change as a result of the STA designation—two travel lanes will continue to exist in each direction. An STA management plan is not required because the OHP requires management plans only when an STA is on an OHP Statewide Highway Freight Route. The Albany-Corvallis Highway is a regional highway and is not an OHP freight route.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Draft Findings of Fact and Conclusions
- Attachment 2 – Albany City Council Resolution of support
- Attachment 3 – STA Highway Segment Designation map
- Attachment 4 – STA Milepoint Descriptions

Copies (w/attachments) to:

Jerri Bohard	Dale Hormann	Patrick Cooney	Lisa Martinez
Paul Mather	Sonny Chickering	Erik Havig	Lisa Nell
Amy Ramsdell	Nancy E. Murphy		

Attachment 1

Findings of Compliance with the Oregon Transportation Plan, Oregon Highway Plan, ODOT State Agency Coordination Plan (OAR 731-15), the Oregon Planning Goals and the Albany Comprehensive Plan

Special Transportation Area Designation, Downtown Albany, Oregon
Albany-Corvallis Highway (State Highway 31; US-20)
Roadway 1 Milepoints 10.57-11.10; Roadway 2 Milepoints 10.58-10.99;
Connector 031AB Milepoints 11.07-11.10 and Connector 058AH Milepoints 2.71-2.74

1. Compliance with the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), Oregon Highway Plan (OHP), the ODOT State Agency Coordination Program (OAR 731-015) and the Albany Comprehensive Plan.

Policies in the OTP do not directly address the designation of a Special Transportation Area (STA). A Special Transportation Area (STA) is an OHP highway segment designation used to address areas of compact development when the need for local access outweighs the need for highway mobility. Its primary objective is to provide access to and circulation amongst community activities, businesses and residences and to accommodate pedestrian, bicycle and transit movement along and across the highway. Designating an STA in Downtown Albany allows the transportation system to be better coordinated with community's expectations for Downtown Albany as a pedestrian oriented development area. The stated objective of an STA promotes a transportation system with multiple travel choices and is supportive of the downtown area of Albany. It will encourage development and redevelopment in the downtown area in a compact community manner. An STA designation in Downtown Albany complies with OTP Policies 1.1, 1.2, 3.3 and 4.3.

The OHP Land Use and Transportation Section describes the type of area where STAs are appropriate. Downtown Albany fits the description of a Category 1 STA because the OHP designates the Albany-Corvallis Highway (US-20; State Highway 31) as a Regional Highway rather than as a Statewide Highway. There is no OHP Freight Route designation on the highway. As a Category 1 STA, no management plan is needed to designate the STA. The highway currently consists of two travel lanes on Ellsworth and Lyon Streets and on Ninth Avenue. At the south end of the couplet, Connector 031AB and Connector 058AH complete the circulation system by providing access to adjoining retail businesses, surrounding a triangular pedestrian island formed by the roadways and providing sidewalks and crosswalks linked to Albany Multi-modal Center and Amtrak Rail Station.

There is no change in travel lane configuration associated with this STA designation and no reduction in highway capacity. The State's transportation needs in Downtown Albany are met with an STA designation. Designation of an STA in Downtown Albany complies with the intent of the OHP.

ODOT's Administrative Rule 731-015 is the State Agency Coordination Program for the department. The purpose of this program is to assure that ODOT land use programs comply with the statewide planning goals and acknowledged comprehensive plans. OAR 731-015-0035 identifies ODOT activities that significantly affect land use. Identification of an STA is not an activity that is defined as significantly affecting land use. OAR 731-015 calls for ODOT to involve the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), and any metropolitan planning organization, (MPO), city, county, or other agency or party that would be interested when amending a policy plan such as the OHP. DLCD was involved in development of the Albany TSP Update. DLCD has established that the TSP Update complies with that agency's requirements for a TSP by acknowledging the plan. ODOT Region 2 Staff consulted with DLCD staff about STA designation in Downtown Albany; DLCD supports the action. FHWA staff stated no objection to an STA designation in Downtown Albany when consulted by Region 2 Staff. The Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was authorized by the Governor during February 2013. The MPO is in its formative stage and has no Regional Transportation Plan. The MPO Policy Board reviewed the proposed STA designation at its March 20, 2013 meeting. The Policy Board supported STA designation. The City of Albany has demonstrated its support for STA designation with a City Council resolution. No other local government is directly impacted by STA designation, and no other local government has stated an objection to STA designation within the Albany City Limits. The public hearing held by the OTC is another opportunity for interested agencies and parties to make concerns about designating an STA known. OAR 731-015 also applies to development and adoption of final facility plans. ODOT procedures state that a transportation facility plan must be developed if an STA management plan has been prepared. No management plan has been prepared because the OHP does not require a management plan to designate a Category 1 STA, and Downtown Albany qualifies as a Category 1 STA. The provisions of OAR 731-015 applicable to final facility plans are not applicable to this STA designation. STA designation in Downtown Albany complies with the requirements of this administrative rule.

STA designation supports the City of Albany's Comprehensive Plan for the Downtown Area. Albany's Plan designates all of the properties along the highway as "Village Center" except City Hall, the Linn County Courthouse, and St. Mary's Catholic Church. City Hall and the County Courthouse are designated, "Public and Semi-Public; St. Mary's Catholic Church is designated "Low Density Residential." The Village Center plan designation is a mixed-use designation that includes retail and residential uses together with offices, community and personal services. Development in the plan designation is to be pedestrian friendly, fit the desired scale, character of nearby neighborhoods, and prevent the appearance of strip commercial development. The convenience of movement with STA areas is focused on pedestrian, bicycle and transit movements, so the designation is compatible with Albany's plan designation and the implementing zoning districts, and with public and semi-public buildings. The City of Albany's resolution of support demonstrates the City's support for an STA designation.

2. Compliance with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals.

Action by the Oregon Transportation Commission to establish an STA in Downtown Albany complies with the requirements of Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals. Findings of Compliance with each goal are provided below.

Goal 1 Public Involvement. This goal calls for jurisdictions to develop public involvement programs and to provide opportunities for public involvement consistent with adopted programs when amendments to plans are being considered. The City of Albany has an adopted public involvement program that was used to develop the City's Transportation Systems Plan (TSP) Update. Several public meetings were held to update the TSP; opportunities to provide public input were provided at these meetings. Transportation improvements needed in Downtown Albany with and without an STA designation were presented at these meetings. Additional opportunities for public testimony were provided at the City Planning Commission and City Council public hearings before the TSP Update was adopted. The TSP Update calls for transportation facilities that are consistent with a designation of an STA.

Public involvement is a part of the process used to amend the OHP, and adoption of an STA designation amends to the OHP. ODOT's State Agency Coordination Rule, OAR 731-015 states that ODOT is to engage public agencies and the public when a plan amendment is proposed. DLCD and other agencies with possible interest in STA designation have been contacted to determine if concerns exist with the designation. No concerns have been stated. The OTC hearing has provided the opportunity for other persons to participate in the process. The requirements of the Goal have been met.

Goal 2 Land Use Planning. The Albany Comprehensive Plan characterizes Downtown Albany as an area with a pedestrian orientation. The OHP provides highway segment designations to certain areas: a Special Transportation Area (STA) is the designation used where the convenience of movement is focused on pedestrian, bicycle and transit movements. This designation is compatible with Albany's plan designations for Downtown Albany. STA designation complies with the requirements of this goal.

Goal 3, Agricultural Lands. Downtown Albany is designated for urban use in the City of Albany Comprehensive Plan. The requirements of this goal are not applicable to actions on lands designated for urban use.

Goal 4 Forest Lands. Downtown Albany is designated for urban use in the acknowledged City of Albany Comprehensive Plan. The requirements of this goal are not applicable to actions on lands designated for urban use.

Goal 5 Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas and Natural Resources. The Albany STA designation applies to sections of a state highway that are within historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The STA designation does not change the configuration or appearance of the highway or mandate future changes to the existing

highway that would make any physical change within the historic district. STA designation does not impair Albany's ability to comply with Goal 5. Designation of a Downtown Albany STA complies with the Goal 5 requirements.

Goal 6 Air Water and Land Resources Quality. Albany has developed a comprehensive plan that complies with state and federal regulations applicable to the quality of air, water and lands. Designating an STA does not affect any change to these plan components or to the quality of these resources. Designating an STA in Downtown Albany complies with the requirements of the goal.

Goal 7 Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards. The STA designation applies to the Albany-Corvallis Highway between First and Ninth Avenues. This area is outside the regulatory flood plain in Downtown Albany as shown on Albany's Geographic Information System and on FIRM map 41043C0213G. Areas known to be subject to natural disasters or hazards are not affected by STA designation, so the goal does not apply.

Goal 8 Recreation Needs. The STA designation applies only to the highway through Downtown Albany. There are no existing or planned recreational sites or facilities within the highway right-of-way. The goal does not apply.

Goal 9 Economy of the State. STA designation does not change in the number of travel lanes through Downtown Albany. STA designation will not result in any change to highway capacity. STA designation in Downtown Albany does not change any land use designation. The goal does not apply.

Goal 10 Housing. STA designation applies only to the highway through Downtown Albany. It does not change any city regulations applicable to the provision of needed housing. The goal does not apply.

Goal 11 Public Facilities and Services. The goal requires development of local facility plans for all public facilities and services, including transportation. The goal's requirements for transportation plans are accomplished by developing a TSP meeting Goal 12 and OAR 660-012 requirements. These findings of fact and conclusions demonstrate that a Downtown Albany STA designation complies with the requirements of Goal 11 because the designation complies with the requirements of Goal 12 and OAR 660-012.

Goal 12 Transportation. Goal 12 and OAR 660-012 establish the requirements for local government transportation systems plans as required in Goal 11, Public Facilities and Services. Options that could be undertaken to meet the current OHP mobility targets were evaluated as part of the TSP Update. Albany selected the option that aligns most closely with its Village Center Comprehensive Plan designation. DLCDC participated in development of the TSP Update. Following adoption of the update by the City of Albany, DLCDC reviewed and acknowledged the plan as meeting that agency's requirements for a TSP.

Goal 12 also calls for development of a state transportation system plan. The OTP and the adopted multimodal, modal/topic and facility plans, including the OHP, are the state transportation system plan. The OHP provides direction about the State's highway needs and provides for STAs. Downtown Albany meets the OHP's description of STAs.

The highway currently consists of two travel lanes on Ellsworth and Lyon Streets and on Ninth Avenue. No change in this configuration occurs as part of STA designation, so there is no reduction in highway capacity and the state's transportation needs continue to be met with an STA designation. STA designation complies with the requirements of the goal.

Goal 13 Energy. STA designation does not change energy consumption within the Albany UGB. The goal does not apply.

Goal 14 Urbanization. The STA designation applies only to an area already part of the City of Albany. This area already is urbanized and is included in the area to be urbanized in Albany. The requirements of the goal does not apply to designation of an STA.

Goal 15 Willamette River Greenway. The STA designation extends between First Avenue and Ninth Avenue. This area is outside the Greenway boundary and is not affected by the City of Albany's Greenway protection program. The goal requirements do not apply to STA designation in Downtown Albany.

Oregon Coastal Goals. The following four goals apply only to communities with these resources. Albany does not have any of these resources, so these goals do not apply.

- a. Goal 16 Estuarine Resources
- b. Goal 17 Coastal Shorelands
- c. Goal 18 Beaches and Dunes
- d. Goal 19 Ocean Resources

RESOLUTION NO. 5946

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING DESIGNATION OF THE ALBANY-CORVALLIS HIGHWAY IN DOWNTOWN ALBANY AS A SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION AREA IN THE OREGON HIGHWAY PLAN.

WHEREAS, the Oregon Highway Plan contains provisions to designate certain state highway segments as "Special Transportation Areas" (STA); and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Department of Transportation has identified that the Downtown Albany section of Albany-Corvallis Highway (State Highway 31 milepoint 10.57 to milepoint 11.11) would qualify for such a designation; and

WHEREAS, the Oregon Transportation Commission will apply such designations only with the support of the local governing body; and

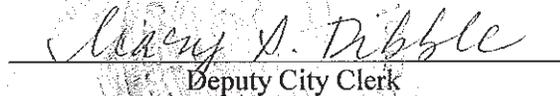
WHEREAS, the benefits to the City of Albany associated with such a highway segment designation include more favorable and flexible design standards and greater local influence over decision making on state highway facilities.

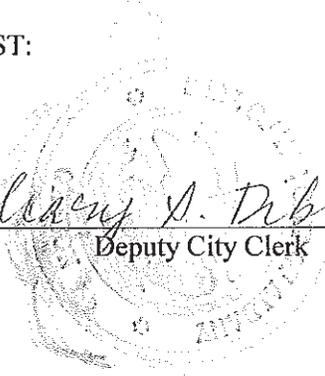
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Albany supports the designation of Ellsworth Street from First Avenue to Ninth Avenue; Ninth Avenue from Ellsworth Street to Lyon Street, and Lyon Street from First Avenue to the Albany Multimodal Center (US-20 Albany-Corvallis Highway 31 milepoint 10.57 to milepoint 11.11) as a Special Transportation Area.

DATED AND EFFECTIVE THIS 22nd DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2010.

ATTEST:

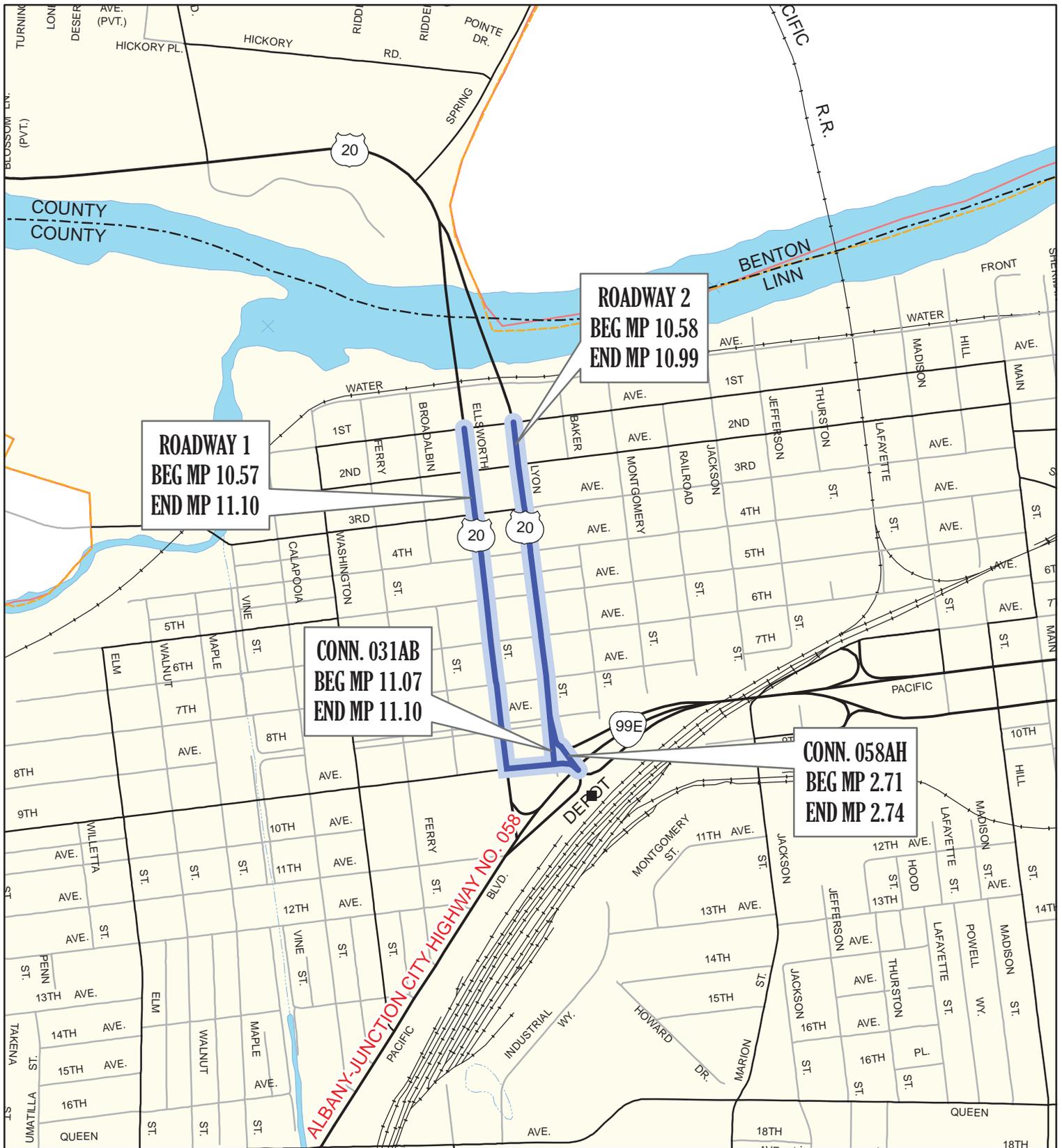

Mayor


Deputy City Clerk



HWY. SEGMENT DESIGNATION

Attachment 3
 Albany, Oregon
 Albany - Corvallis Highway No. 31
 (US 20)



STA SEGMENT



0 0.2
 Miles
 PRODUCED BY ODOT - GIS UNIT
 (503) 986-3154 - JUNE 2013
 GIS No. 23-98



DISCLAIMER

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Milepoint Identification of ODOT Highway Segment Designations
Proposed Designations for the Oregon Transportation Commission
July 2013
Draft

ODOT Region	Location	Route	Highway Name	Hwy	Rdwy ID	Begin MP	Begin	End MP	End	Mileage	STA, UBA, Com Ctr	OHP Hwy Class	NHS	OTC Approval Date
2	Albany	US20	Albany-Corvallis	031	1	10.57	1st Ave.	11.10	Conn. 058AH	0.53	STA	Regional	Yes	Proposed
2	Albany	US20	Albany-Corvallis	031	2	10.58	1st Ave.	10.99	Conn. 058AH	0.41	STA	Regional	Yes	Proposed
2	Albany	N/A	Lyon St. Conn.	031A	B	1	11.07	Hwy. 031, Rdwy 1	11.10	0.03	STA	N/A	Yes	Proposed
2	Albany	N/A	Albany-Corvallis Hwy Conn. 2	058A	H	1	2.71	Hwy. 031, Rdwy 1	2.74	0.03	STA	N/A	Yes	Proposed

Total Proposed UBA Mileage 0.00
Total Proposed STA Mileage 0.53
Total Proposed Comm. Center 0.00
Total Proposed 0.53

*Rdwy IDs of "2" indicate the opposite side of a couplet and are not included in mileage totals.
Connections are not included in mileage total in this case either because they act as part of couplet.