Background

Not only is US 97 critical for freight, but it is also vital for rescue and recovery in case of an event such as a major earthquake. With growth in both general and freight traffic along the corridor, and increasing concerns about safety and delay, ODOT decided in 2016 to develop a freight plan specifically for the US 97 corridor in Oregon (see map of the corridor below).

Completed in 2017, Phase 1 of the US 97 Freight Plan addressed the need to improve safety and function along US 97 by identifying existing issues with roadway design, crashes and frequency and poor facilities, from rough pavement to rest stops.

Phase 2 of the plan builds on the information provided in Phase 1 about existing conditions along the corridor to identify goals and objectives, provide further study and recommend specific investments in freight.

Project overview

As in Phase 1, for Phase 2, the project team will work with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Motor Carrier TAC (MCTAC), which include freight and local agency representatives as well as ODOT staff, in addition to the Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs) along US 97, to guide development of the plan. The project team will issue a series of publicly-available technical memos on the detailed findings of the study and will be reaching out to freight users, as well as the general public, to provide input on the project.

As part of this outreach, the project team has developed a survey to gather feedback from people in the freight industry on their experiences, concerns and priorities for the US 97 corridor. Starting in summer 2018, the project team will survey and interview freight stakeholder and advocacy groups as well as private shippers and carriers who provide service to and/or are located along US 97.

Based on the input provided as well as the results of the study, the project team will present the draft list of recommended freight investments to the ACTs for review in January 2019.

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Key findings

Phase 1 of the US 97 Freight Plan resulted in some key findings around the design, performance and amenities of the corridor. In Phase 2, the project team will dive deeper into analyzing the following assets and issues identified in Phase 1:

**Economic importance**
- Among the top five highways by percent truck traffic (freight makes up 40% of all vehicles along much of the corridor)
- Value of goods moved ranges from $3.98 to $7.1 billion (natural and agricultural goods make up 80% of goods moved, by weight)

**Corridor “geometry” (design/shape)**
- Long distances with no passing lanes
- Limited redundant/parallel routes
- Varying grades (steep climbs/descents), some with significant curves
- Pinch points (priority list developed)

**Corridor performance**
- Safety is a primary concern for stakeholders
- Urban segments have more excess crashes
- 13 locations along corridor within top 15% incident locations, six within top 10%

**Corridor amenities**
- 11 public/private rest areas
- Only four truck stops recognized as of significant size
- Inadequate truck parking (rest areas spread out, too few spaces)

Phase 2 goals

Freight stakeholders, ODOT staff and freight experts came together to develop the following goals and objectives for the US 97 Freight Plan Phase 2:

- Enhance truck safety
- Improve freight mobility, accessibility and connectivity for key destinations
- Maximize economic competitiveness
- Increase understanding and support for freight needs on the corridor

Get involved!

Are you invested in the future of US 97 in Oregon? Make your voice heard by completing the project’s online survey at the link below. The project team will also be gathering input from the local ACTs in summer 2018, and draft findings from the study will be available for review in January 2019.


Contact information

For more information on the project, please visit the project website, or feel free to contact the ODOT Project Manager.

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