

Regional Bypass Fact Sheet

Background

Traffic congestion along the Oregon 99W corridor has been a recognized problem for many years. The problem is especially acute along the section of Oregon 99W that includes Newberg, Dundee, and the area west of Dundee. In 1989, ODOT studied the feasibility of a bypass around Newberg and Dundee and identified a potential bypass corridor.

Subsequently, numerous potential corridors were evaluated, which, in December 1997, resulted in several alternatives being identified for further evaluation. One of these alternatives became known as the “Regional Bypass.” The Regional Bypass alternative started south of Dundee near the Oregon 99W/18 intersection at McDougal Corner and would connect with I-5 near Donald.

Further analysis of the alternatives identified in 1997 continued in 2001 with the development of a Tier 1 Location Environmental Impact Statement (Tier 1 EIS) for a Newberg Dundee Bypass. The LEIS determined the location of a bypass corridor in which a bypass could be built.

Eighteen alternative corridors were initially considered, nine of which were subsequently dismissed from further consideration. The alternatives dismissed were recommended for dismissal by the Project Oversight Steering Team in July 2001. The Regional Bypass was one of the nine alternatives dismissed from further consideration because of the cost, regulatory opposition and low system performance.

In the Tier 1 EIS process, the Regional Bypass was described as new 4-lane access controlled expressway from I-5 to Oregon 219 parallel to McKay Road (including a new interchange at the Regional Bypass and I-5), a new interchange at Oregon 219 and the Regional Bypass, a new 2-lane expressway from Oregon 219 to Oregon 99W south of Dundee (and bridge over the Willamette and Willamette floodplain), and a new interchange at the Regional Bypass and Oregon 99W. The Tier 1 EIS 2025 analysis forecasted an average daily traffic volume (ADT) of 32,000 vehicles on the eastern segment (I-5 to 219) of the Regional Bypass and 20,000 ADT on the western segment (219 to 99W).

The Tier 1 EIS process resulted in federal “Record of Decision” in August 2005 and the selection of the current “Southern Bypass” corridor.

**2001
Rationale for
Dismissal**

- a. The Regional Bypass would not reduce traffic volume in downtown Newberg or Dundee. In fact, models forecast unchanged or increased traffic volumes on Oregon 99W compared to existing traffic volumes.
- b. The estimated cost for the Regional Bypass was 33% higher than the Southern Bypass, partially because of the need for a long bridge over the Willamette River that would also have to cross a great deal of floodplain in Marion County. In addition to the basic project elements listed in the Background section above, this cost estimate included:
 1. Widening Oregon 99W to five lanes through Dundee;
 2. Widening Oregon 99W to four lanes between Dundee and McDougal Junction;
- c. The Tier 1 cost estimate did not include other needed system improvements that would be required as a result of the changes in traffic patterns that would occur with the construction of the Regional Bypass. Including these additional improvements would more than double the total cost of the Regional Bypass compared to building a bypass within the federally approved Southern Bypass corridor. These additional improvements include:
 1. Widening Oregon 219, including turn lanes and two additional travel lanes from the new interchange at Oregon 219 and the Regional Bypass into Newberg;
 2. Widening the current Willamette River bridge on Oregon 219 to four lanes;
 3. Adding at least two new lanes to I-5 between Exit 278 and at least I-205 to handle the traffic diverted from the Oregon 99W corridor to the I-5 corridor, including the bridges over the Willamette River as well as all interchanges and structures along that approximately 12 mile segment of I-5.
 4. Cost to maintain or restore local road system connectivity.
- d. The federal government mandates that wetlands are to be protected and preserved. Wetland impacts were estimated to be 30 to 50 percent higher with the Regional Bypass compared to the other alternatives considered.
- e. An estimated 500 acres of farm land would be lost under the Regional Bypass and its associated improvements, which is substantially greater than the southern corridor. Much of this land is in Marion County.
- f. On two occasions, the Marion County Commission passed a resolution against the Regional Bypass because of county farm land impacts. Marion County has also stated that it would not approve the goal exceptions and comprehensive plan amendments needed to build the Regional Bypass.
- g. US Fish and Wildlife stated, "it is likely either of the regional by-pass alternatives would fail the alternatives test in the Clean Water Act 404(1) guidelines."

- h. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development agreed the Regional Bypass would be hard to justify given the difficulty of mitigating farm and urbanization impacts.

**Regional
Bypass Issues
Since 2001**

Since the Regional Bypass was considered and dismissed in the Tier 1 EIS process, the following additional issues have developed:

1. The assumed 2-lane highway section between Oregon 219 and Oregon 99W (including the bridge over the Willamette River and associated floodplain) would likely have to be expanded to a 4-lane highway to deal with the increase in traffic that would be forecasted with an extension of the planning horizon from 2025 to 2035.
2. Traffic projections make it clear that the option to just add a 2 lane extension with a bridge between the end of McKay Rd and Highway 18 will not meet the forecasted demand.
3. The impact to I-5 of the traffic diverted from the Oregon 99W corridor, even with two new travel lanes, may exceed adopted Oregon Highway Plan mobility standards. As a result, four rather than two new travel lanes may be needed on I-5 between Exit 278 and I-205 to deal with the diverted traffic and the traffic growth that is already expected in the I-5 corridor.