

# Highway 131 Transportation Refinement Plan: Oceanside Special Transportation Area Analysis

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This technical memorandum analyzes the potential to designate Pacific Avenue (Highway 131) in Oceanside between the Ocean Street/Maxwell Avenue (milepost [MP] 0.00) and Cape Meares Loop Road (MP 0.24) intersections as a Special Transportation Area (STA). This technical memorandum, which addresses Task 6.2 and Consultant Deliverable 6B of the project scope of work, is divided into four sections: (1) definition of STAs; (2) Existing Conditions; (3) STA Analysis; and (4) Recommendation.

## Special Transportation Areas

The 1999 Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) defines the policies and investment strategies for Oregon's state highway system. Policy 1B (Land Use and Transportation) of the OHP recognizes the role of both state and local governments regarding the state highway system, land use planning, and transportation planning. Policy 1B:

- Recognizes that state highways serve as the main streets of many communities
- Strives to maintain balance between serving local traffic and the through traveler
- Emphasizes management of the transportation system for safety and efficient use of resources
- Calls for a coordinated approach to land use and transportation planning

A STA is one tool identified in Policy 1B as a tool to implement Policy 1B of the OHP.

An STA is an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) designated district located on a state highway in which the need for appropriate local access outweighs the considerations of highway mobility, except on designated freight routes where accessibility and mobility needs are balanced<sup>1</sup>. Within STAs, highways may be managed to provide a greater level of access to businesses and residences than might otherwise be allowed. The primary highway management objective of a STA is to provide access to community activities, businesses, and residences, and to move pedestrian, bicycle, and transit traffic along and across the highway in a safe and convenient manner. STAs integrate land use, alternative modes, traffic

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<sup>1</sup> Highway 131 is not a designated freight route.

management, and access management. The following is the definition of a STA from the OHP (Page 50):

***Special Transportation Area:*** *The primary objective of managing highway facilities in an existing or future STA is provide access to community activities, business, and residences and to accommodate pedestrian movement along and across the highway in a downtown, business district and/or community center including those in incorporated communities, as defined by OAR 660-022-0010(10). An STA is a highway segment designation that may be applied to a highway segment when a downtown, business district or community center straddles the state highway within an urban growth boundary or in an unincorporated community in accordance with Action 1B.9. Direct connections and shared on-street parking are encouraged in urban areas and may be encouraged in unincorporated communities. Direct property access is limited in an STA. Local auto, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit movements to the business district or community center are generally as important as the through movement of traffic. Traffic speeds are slow, generally 25 miles per hour or less.*

Per Table 2 of the OHP, STAs are permitted on non-expressway designated rural district highways (all of OR 131 within the Highway 131 Transportation Refinement Plan study area [MP 0.00 to 4.14] fits into this category).

A range of design standards and guidance for developing appropriate STAs are provided in Chapter 8.4 (Special Transportation Areas) of the ODOT Highway Design Manual (HDM). The HDM allows for flexibility in roadway design for STAs, and states the following:

*“Because downtowns vary in nature, not all design elements will be the same... the designer, working along with the Project Team, should look at each STA independently and apply the STA design standards appropriately. The STA standards provide a range of values to use in design of the roadway typical section, as values for lane width, sidewalk, bike lane/shoulder width, median width, and parking width are variable. The surrounding culture, roadway environment, traffic volume and traffic type all need to be considered in order to select applicable standards for a particular STA.”*

## Existing Conditions

The following briefly summarizes the existing conditions of Pacific Avenue (Highway 131) in Oceanside. Pictures 1 through 6 illustrate existing conditions.

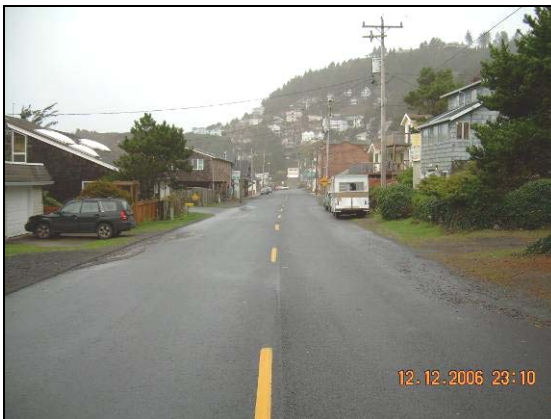
Pacific Avenue in Oceanside is aligned north to south, has two travel lanes (one in each direction), and is striped down the center with a yellow dashed line. The posted speed limit is 25 miles per hour (mph). The average annual daily traffic (AADT) is 1,200 vehicles. Sidewalks are limited to short segments on the north end in front of a mixed use building (restaurant and inn) on the east side, and between the Oceanside Community Center and a second restaurant on the west side (Picture 5). Although there are multiple access points (private driveways), no public roads intersect Pacific Avenue between Ocean Street/Maxwell Avenue and Cape Meares Loop Road. There is no designated on-street parking, although there is sufficient space for on-street parking where sidewalks are located (Picture 5). Areas without sidewalks have limited to no shoulder width (Picture 1 through 4).



Picture 1: Pacific Avenue northbound at MP 0.22 (immediately north of Cape Meares Loop Road)



Picture 2: Pacific Avenue northbound at MP 0.19



Picture 3: Pacific Avenue northbound at MP 0.16



Picture 4: Pacific Avenue northbound at MP 0.12 (at the Oceanside Inn)



Picture 5: Pacific Avenue northbound at MP 0.09



Picture 6: Pacific Avenue northbound at MP 0.06 (at the Oceanside Post Office)

Land uses on Pacific Avenue are single-family residential and commercial (Picture 1 through 6):

- All land uses between Cape Meares Loop (MP 0.24) and MP 0.11 are single-family residential with access to Pacific Avenue (Picture 1 through 3).

- On the west side of Pacific Avenue between MP 0.11 and the end of OR 131 at Ocean Street/Maxwell Avenue (MP 0.00) is a motel, restaurant, vacant property, post office, the Oceanside Community Center, and an off-street parking lot (Picture 4 through 6).
- On the east side is of Pacific Avenue between MP 0.11 and 0.00 are private garages, a mixed use building (restaurant and inn), and fire station (Picture 4 through 6).

## Special Transportation Area Analysis

Table 1 analyzes designating OR 131 in Oceanside as an STA. The first column lists the primary characteristics and attributes of STAs, as documented in the OHP. The second column documents the consistency of Pacific Avenue (Highway 131) existing conditions with the STA characteristic/attribute in the first column. This second column divides Pacific Avenue into two areas (north end and south end) because there are single-family residential land uses on the southern half (MP 0.24 to approximately MP 0.12) of Pacific Avenue, and commercial land uses on the northern half of Pacific Avenue (approximately MP 0.12 to MP 0.00). The third column explains the finding(s) in the second column. For reference of existing conditions, see Picture 1 through 6 in the previous section (Existing Conditions).

TABLE 1  
Oceanside STA Analysis

STA Characteristics/Attributes	Consistent?		Comments
	North End	South End	
Buildings located close together and located adjacent to the street with little or no setback	Yes	Partially	Buildings on the north end are relatively close together with little setback. However, there is more setback for most of the single-family residential structures on the south end of Pacific Avenue.
Sidewalks with ample width located adjacent to the highway and the buildings	No	No	Existing locations with sidewalks are short segments located on the north end of the corridor with limited width.
A well-developed parallel and interconnected local roadway network, except where topography severely constrains the potential for street connections.	Yes	Yes	There are no intersections between Ocean Street/Maxwell Avenue (MP 0.00) and Cape Meares Loop Road (MP 0.24). Topography constrains the potential for a local roadway network (ocean on the west; steep bank on the east of Pacific Avenue). Existing buildings would be displaced to develop a roadway network to connect Pacific Avenue with Tillamook Avenue (the roadway parallel to Pacific Avenue on the east).
Streets designed for ease of crossing by pedestrians	Partially	Partially	There are no curb extensions or designated crosswalks, but low travel volumes (AADT of 1,200 vehicles) and posted speed (25 mph) makes it relatively easy for pedestrians to cross Highway 131 in Oceanside.
Public road connections that correspond to the existing city block - private driveways are discouraged	No	No	Other than the north and south limits of Pacific Avenue at Ocean Street/Maxwell Avenue (MP 0.00) and Cape Meares Loop Road (MP 0.24), there are no public road connections and several private residential driveways (most to single-family residential land uses).

STA Characteristics/Attributes	Consistent?		Comments
	North End	South End	
Adjacent land uses that provide for compact, mixed-use development	Partially	No	There is one compact mixed-use development on the north end and potential for a mixed-use development on one vacant lot. There are no mixed-use developments on the south end; all lots are developed with single-family residential structures. In total, there are four commercial businesses, a post office, and a community center on Pacific Avenue.
On street parking and/or shared general purpose parking lots which are located behind or to the side of buildings	Yes	No	There is sufficient space for on-street parking on the north end, but there are no marked on-street parking spaces. The parking lot adjacent to the Community Center provides shared short-term parking for Pacific Avenue businesses. There is no on-street parking on the south end and no parking lots, although gravel shoulders are used as on-street parking during the summer peak period.
Well-developed transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, including street amenities that support these modes	No	No	Pedestrian facilities are limited to short sidewalk segments on the north end; there are no bicycle or transit facilities or amenities (bike racks, benches, transit shelters) to support these modes.
Posted speeds of 25 mph or less	Yes	Yes	The posted speed limit on Pacific Avenue is 25 mph

Table 1 concludes Pacific Avenue existing conditions:

- Meet STA characteristics/attributes on the north end and south end for two of the ten characteristics/attributes
- Is inconsistent with three of the ten characteristics/attributes for the north end and the south end of Pacific Avenue

Highway 131 terminates in Oceanside at the motel and Wayside. There is no ability to continue north. The STA objective that “Local auto, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit movements ... are generally as important as the through movement of traffic” is not relevant for Pacific Avenue in Oceanside, since through traffic is not accommodated by this segment of highway.

## Recommendation

Highway 131 in Oceanside does not serve through traffic as it is the end of the highway and there are no destinations beyond Oceanside easily accessible from this section of highway. Topography, land uses adjacent to the roadway, low traffic volumes, and low crash rates make future extensions of Highway 131 extremely unlikely. Rather, the project team has discussed removing the highway designation from Pacific Avenue altogether. Because this section of Highway 131 primarily serves local access, an STA designation offers few if any advantages for highway-related planning in Oceanside..For these reasons, the project team does not recommend designating Pacific Avenue (Highway 131) in Oceanside as a STA.

