

Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation Update

The proposed H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor – Steel Bridge Road project may affect a group of properties considered potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). This group of buildings and property is referred to in this section as the Grand Ronde Historic District.

Highway projects that impact historic properties must fulfill the requirements of section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966, which sets the requirement for consideration of park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites in transportation project development. The law, now codified in Title 23 U.S.C. 138, “Preservation of Parklands,” states that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historical sites. Any program or project shall not be approved if it requires the use of any publicly owned land from a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, state, or local significance as determined by the federal, state, or local jurisdiction, or any land from a national, state, or locally significant historic site unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such park, recreational area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historical site resulting from such use, and all planning to minimize impacts has been undertaken.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and afford the Council a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings. The Section 106 process seeks to accommodate historic preservation concerns with the needs of federal undertakings through consultation among the agency official and other parties with an interest in the effects of the undertaking on historic properties, commencing at the early stages of project planning.

A Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation for the Grand Ronde Historic District was included in the H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor – Steel Bridge Road EA. The Grand Ronde Historic District comprises several related properties located at Grand Ronde near the junction of ORE 18 and Grand Ronde Road. Construction phase 5 of the Preferred Alternative includes a project to improve South Street as an access road and extend it to the west. Although this project is not expected to have a direct or a constructive use 4(f) impact to the district, application of the criteria of adverse effect established in article 800.5 of Section 106 (36 C.F.R. 800 “Protection of Historic Places”) indicates that the proposed project would have an effect, possibly adverse, on the potential historic district. Improvements to South Street may increase traffic through the residential area and change the character of the district’s setting by adding visual, atmospheric, and audible elements that have the potential to diminish the integrity of the district.

ODOT has not conducted a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for any properties in the Grand Ronde Historic District. It is expected that the improvement and extension of South Street would be constructed in approximately 2015. Not enough information is available about the specific construction phase to determine if a DOE needs to be done. ODOT, in concurrence with Christine Curran, Preservation Specialist with the Oregon SHPO, has

determined that it is too early to prepare a DOE and a Finding of Effect report. ODOT will prepare the appropriate Section 106 documentation when this individual construction phase is more fully developed.