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	REFERENCE OAR 660-012-0060, OAR 731-15-045	
SUBJECT PROCESS FOR CLASSIFYING OR RECLASSIFYING HIGHWAYS IN THE STATEWIDE HIGHWAY SYSTEM	APPROVED SIGNATURE Signature on file with Director, Commission, and History Center Files	

PURPOSE

The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) shall approve highway classification or reclassification and amend the 1999 Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) when a new highway is constructed, an existing highway is reclassified, or a roadway is transferred from a local jurisdiction to the state by State Highway Designation and becomes part of the state highway system. This procedure outlines that process for the Oregon Department of Transportation (Department).

BACKGROUND

The language in OHP Policy 1A defines the objectives and functions of Interstate, Statewide, Regional and District Highways, and Local Interest Roads. Almost all Statewide Highways are on the National Highway System (NHS), a federal designation. A list of state highways and their classifications is in Appendix D of the OHP.

Under the OHP, highway classification determines the applicable highway mobility standards, access management standards, and maintenance and investment levels. Highway classification may affect the possibilities for Special Transportation Areas and/or Urban Business Areas.

The classification of each state highway shall align with the Federal Functional Classification as feasible. Statewide Highways or NHS routes are roughly the equivalent of Principal Arterials in the Federal Functional Classification system. Regional Highways are like Minor Arterials; District Highways are like Minor Arterials, Major Collectors, or Minor Collectors.

As used in this procedure, highway classification does not include OHP highway designations on segments of highway such as Freight Routes, Expressways, or Highway Segment Designations. Such designations influence the classification decision for a highway, but are not determinative. Other categories of highways that are not considered classifications for purposes of this procedure are Life Line Routes and Scenic Byways. Procedures for the designations listed in this paragraph vary, but all result from some level of transportation

facility planning in consultation with affected local jurisdictions. (See PLA-01, the ODOT Transportation Facility Plan Adoption Process, http://intranet.odot.state.or.us/ssb/BSS/documents/p&p/PLA_01_PROCEDURE.pdf)

Approval of the classification does not change any of the federally designated highways such as a National Network (NN) or a NHS designation. The NN and NHS are federally designated and may exist on any classification of highway. (The NN and NHS routes are identified in Appendix D of the OHP.) These federal designations on a highway shall be considered when deciding to reclassify a highway to support its function.

PROCEDURE

Highway classification decisions shall occur as early as possible in the planning or project development process to understand the implications for land use and local transportation system planning under the Transportation Planning Rule (OAR 660-012-0060).

- For classification of a new highway, identification of the intended highway classification shall occur early enough to be included in the assumptions used to develop alternatives for the Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Assessment (EIS/EA) and intergovernmental agreement;
- Any reclassification of an existing highway shall be supported by a documented review that identifies current conditions, current and projected uses that are not consistent with the existing classification, and long-term system needs for the facility. The necessary review shall often occur in a transportation facility plan and/or during the preliminary design phase of a project; and
- For classification of a roadway to be transferred from local to state jurisdiction, the District Manager overseeing the Highway Designation working with the Region Manager to name the intended highway classification and include it in the first intergovernmental agreement establishing the intent to make the Highway Designation.

A highway classification or reclassification decision amends the OHP, which requires following the procedures of the State Agency Coordination (SAC) Program. If the classification has only local effects, it is a minor amendment to the OHP and requires limited findings. If the classification has major effects or policy implications, it is a major amendment. The SAC requires the Department to involve the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), affected Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), interested cities, counties, state and federal agencies, special districts, and other interested parties to hold a public meeting on such a plan amendment. According to the SAC, public involvement may take the form of mailings, meetings, or other means the Department considers proper.

For major amendments, the Department shall draft findings of compliance with all applicable statewide planning goals. The OTC makes the decision to classify the highway and amends the OHP in the same action.

RESPONSIBILITY **STEP** **ACTION**

Region Planning
Manager and/or
District Manager

- 1 Tell the Region Manager, the Technical Center Manager, and OHP Manager of the need to classify or reclassify a state highway at the earliest stage practical in the planning process that identifies that need:
 - 1A) Classification of a new highway: Early enough to be included in the assumptions used for EIS/EA environmental review.
 - 1B) Reclassification of an existing highway: When a transportation facility plan or project plan identifies that the function of the roadway has changed to the extent that the current classification is no longer correct.
 - 1C) Classification of a roadway being transferred from local jurisdiction to the state highway system before drafting Highway Designation agreement.

- 2 Decide the correct classification for the subject roadway and document the basis for that determination based upon the following activities:
 - Examine current and projected conditions as they relate to:
 - Current function of the state highway locally and in relationship to the state highway system, including how it relates to the movement of freight and oversize loads through the state;
 - Existing and planned land uses and zoning in the vicinity of the facility
 - Indicators of a change in function since an earlier classification decision was made, such as a change in average daily trips, increased congestion, redevelopment, or rezoning in the vicinity of the facility.
 - Future local, regional, and statewide travel and freight transport needs.
 - Consider the purposes the highway serves and its function in applicable local, regional and statewide Transportation System Plans (TSP).
 - Re-evaluate the highway's Federal Functional Classification. The Federal Functional Classification description and OHP classification definitions shall be generally parallel.

- 3 Coordinate with the Road Inventory and Classification Services Unit Manager early in the process to ensure coordination and timing of NHS and other classification

<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>STEP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
		changes.
	4	Once the correct classification is identified, obtain the Region Manager's approval to move forward with the proposed classification.
	5	Bring the proposed classification or reclassification to the Planning Business Line Team (PBLT) for discussion and recommendation to the Transportation Development Division (TDD) Administrator to approve or disapprove.
	6	Review the proposed classification with the affected local governments, MPO, and Area Commission on Transportation (ACT) by mailings, meetings, or other means the Department decides are correct for the circumstances.
	7	If the TDD Administrator approves the proposed classification or reclassification, work with the OHP Manager to tell DLCDC of the proposal. If the TDD Administrator does not approve the change, work with the affected local governments to review the proposal and make changes needed to address the concerns and send the revised proposal to PBLT.
	8	If the classification or reclassification is approved, draft a brief staff report (one to two pages) describing the proposed classification or reclassification and the reasons for selecting the classification and send a copy to the OHP Manager.
	9	Ask for a map of the highway area proposed for classification from the Geographic Information Services (GIS) Unit and send a copy to the OHP Manager.
Region Planning Manager	10	Coordinate with the OHP Manager on the development of final submissions to the OTC. The staff report and the GIS Unit map shall be included in the request for the classification.
Region Planning Manager <u>and</u> OHP Manager	11	Except for minor amendments, work together to prepare written findings of consistency with all applicable statewide planning goals for inclusion in the request for the classification.
	12	Work together in preparation of an OTC agenda cover memo.

<u>RESPONSIBILITY</u>	<u>STEP</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
Transportation Development Division (TDD) Administrator and Region Planning Manager	13	Send the materials to the OTC staff for inclusion on the next OTC meeting agenda or consent calendar. If an OTC presentation is necessary, be present at the OTC meeting with the Region Planning Manager requesting the classification to answer questions. (The OTC meeting is the public meeting required by the SAC.)
	14	Tell the Region and others of the action of the OTC. Others to be notified include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affected MPO and local governments• Affected ACT• Technical Services Branch• Transportation Data Section (GIS and Road Inventory Classification Services [RICS] Units) so the change can be recorded in the road inventory data base• Access Management Unit• Project Leaders for projects in areas affected by the change• Project Managers for projects in areas affected by the change• OHP Manager for posting to the OHP Registry of Amendments• Motor Carrier Transportation Division
	15	Coordinate with the affected local governments to amend local TSPs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For projects, between the draft and final National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 document; and• For other classification decisions, at the next update of the TSP/Comprehensive Plan to show the classification change.
	16	Notify RICS Unit when TSP has been updated.

Attachment A: Analysis and Findings

Characteristics of Highway Classifications

The state highway classification system divides state highways into five categories based on function: Interstate, Statewide, Regional, District, and Local Interest Roads. The following management objectives and characteristics give a basis for determining the correct classification for a state highway:

- **Interstate Highways or NHS:** The management objective is to provide for safe and efficient, high-speed, continuous-flow operation in urban and rural areas. Characteristics:
 - Provide connections to major cities, regions of the state, and other states.
 - Secondly, in urban areas provide connections for regional trips within the metropolitan area.
 - Major freight routes with the objective to provide freight mobility.
- **Statewide Highways:** The management objective is to provide safe and efficient, high-speed, continuous-flow operation. Characteristics:
 - Provide inter-urban and inter-regional mobility.
 - Provide connections to larger urban areas, ports, and major recreation areas not directly served by Interstate Highways.
 - Secondly, provide connections for intra-urban and intra-regional trips.
 - In constrained and urban areas, interruptions to flow shall be minimal.
 - Inside Special Transportation Areas (STAs), local access may also be a priority.
- **Regional Highways:** The management objective is to provide safe and efficient, high-speed, continuous-flow operation in rural areas and moderate to high-speed operations in urban and urbanizing areas. Characteristics:
 - Provide connections and links to regional centers, Statewide or Interstate Highways, or economic or activity centers of regional significance.
 - Secondly, serve land uses in the vicinity of Statewide or Interstate highways.
 - Inside STAs, local access is also a priority.
 - Inside Urban Business Areas (UBA), mobility is balanced with local access.
- **District Highways:** The management objective is to provide for safe and efficient, moderate to high-speed continuous-flow operation in rural areas showing the surrounding environment and moderate to low-speed operation in urban and urbanizing areas for traffic flow and for pedestrian and bicycle movements. Characteristics:
 - Transportation facilities of county-wide significance that act largely as county and city arterials or collectors.
 - Provide connections and links between small urbanized areas, rural centers, and urban hubs.
 - Serve local access and traffic.
 - Inside STAs, local access is a priority.
 - Inside UBAs, mobility is balanced with local access.

- **Local Interest Roads:** The management objective is to provide for safe and efficient, low to moderate speed traffic flow and provide for pedestrian and bicycle movements.

Characteristics:

- Function as local streets or arterials and serve little or no purpose for through traffic mobility.
- Some are frontage roads; some are not eligible for federal funding.
- These roads are District Highways or unclassified.
- The Department may seek opportunities to transfer these roads to local jurisdictions through a process delineated according to OHP Policy 2C.

A classification decision determines the management objectives for the roadway and how those objectives can be met given the existing and projected conditions of the roadway and surrounding land uses.

It is necessary to assess both existing and planned conditions and highway system objectives to find the correct classification:

- Primarily, classification relates to the level of use of the transportation facility and the proportion of local to through trips. Traffic counts are used to measure the level of use of the transportation facility (annual average daily trips calculations, peak hour trips and factors, and so on). The proportion of local to through trips may be derived from traffic models, travel surveys, and/or trip count comparisons on different parts of the transportation system. Existing data and local knowledge of transportation facility conditions may be enough to find the correct classification.
- There also needs to be a reasonable expectation that the management objectives for the identified classification can be met. The following questions are intended to help to decide whether objectives can reasonably be met:
 - Is the management objective compatible with existing and permitted land uses?
 - Are there geographic or land use constraints on future capacity improvements?
 - Is there existing Right of Way (ROW) or room to add ROW as needed to meet management objectives?
 - Is alternate access available to land uses that have access to the highway?
 - Is the proposed classification supported in the local comprehensive plan(s), particularly applicable TSPs?
 - Is there a connected local street network and does it create alternatives to the highway for local trips?
 - Are alternate travel modes provided such as transit service, bike facilities, and sidewalks?
 - Are existing and planned alternate modes consistent with the proposed classification?
 - Are there known safety issues that will be improved or made worse when meeting management objectives?

- Are there transportation system conditions that may affect meeting management objectives such as urban or rural location, parallel routes that may serve the proposed function better, adequate sight distance, lane width, and adequate turn radii for proposed speed?

Determining Classification of New Roadways

When investing in a new highway on new alignment, a key issue is the timing of the classification determination. Highway function needs to be decided and conveyed through a public process. Classification decisions need to be documented as early as possible in the project development process so the range of alternatives considered in the environmental assessment represent the intended highway function and so the expected project effects on abutting lands be realistic.

Reclassification of Existing Roadways

A key issue for reclassification decisions is the basis for the change. Reclassification shall most often occur as a result of a transportation facility planning process. The Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) recommends a deliberate process of using transportation corridor or other transportation facility planning to decide whether classification of highways continues to be correct as conditions change over time;

OHP Action 1A.3 (Action) directs the Department to:

Conduct a study of highway classifications statewide to decide whether highways function as they are classified. Conduct this study after the adoption of the Highway Plan as a special study of the classification system or as a part of corridor planning. Consider changing the classification of a state highway if the function of the highway has changed significantly since its original classification or the function does not fit the classification description. The classification change shall be effective when the OTC adopts the change as part of a corridor plan or other planning process.

Two parts of this Action inform the reclassification process. First, reclassification is an outcome of a planning process. The basis for the decision shall be documented and the process shall include the correct level of public involvement.

The second step in the reclassification process is to decide whether it is a minor amendment to the OHP requiring limited findings or a major OHP amendment with major effects or policy implications. Generally, a minor amendment to the OHP has only a local effect on state highways while a major amendment has statewide or system level effects. If this distinction is unclear in a particular case, consult with the Department of Justice.

Classification of Roadways Received Through Highway Designations

A State Highway Designation is the name of the Right of Way Section document/action that transfers roadway jurisdiction to the state. To carry out OHP Policy 2C, the Department has developed Procedure ROW 10-01-10 Roadway Jurisdictional Transfer Process, which includes “a process to ... consider the transfer of local highways and roads that serve

primarily state interests to state jurisdiction” and has developed guidelines: “Transferring Roads: A Handbook for Making Jurisdictional Transfers.” These resources shall be consulted for technical matters about the jurisdictional transfer process.

The Roadway Jurisdictional Transfer Process (Policy ROW-10-01-01) establishes criteria to guide decisions to transfer roads, including the importance of the transportation facility to the functionality of the statewide system and the affects of the transfer on that functionality. Changes in maintenance, highway mobility, or other standards resulting from the transfer shall not negatively affect the function of other nearby state facilities.

The roadway function is one of the first questions to answer when deciding to transfer a roadway into the state highway system. Below are measures of functionality and management objectives for transferred roadways as described in the OHP.

Action 2C.1: Local roads to be transferred to the state may include:

- Urban arterials that serve mainly through traffic; and
- Rural routes that have a statewide economic importance.

Action 2C.3 committed the Department to “Develop a decision-making process for interjurisdictional transfers. . .” that includes the following (among several listed):

- The extent and legal standing of any existing access rights and access management controls is documented and not contested by the Department or the local jurisdiction.

It is very important to long-term transportation facility management to agree upon the correct classification of the roadway and recognizing access management standards early in the jurisdictional transfer process. It is also important to review the status of existing access rights per Action 2C.3 with the local government and establish this in initial intergovernmental agreements. These standards for proposed new approaches to the highway (which are based largely upon highway classification) support the Department’s long term management objectives for the highway.

Classification Decision Process

Because a classification or reclassification decision is an amendment to the OHP, the process comes under the procedures of the State Agency Coordination (SAC) Program. If the classification would have only local effects, it is a minor amendment to the OHP and requires limited findings.

If the classification has major effects or policy implications, it is a major amendment. In this case, the SAC requires the Department to involve the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCDC), affected Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), interested cities, counties, state and federal agencies, special districts, and other interested parties to hold a public meeting on the plan amendment. According to the SAC, public involvement may take the form of mailings, meetings, or other means the Department decides are correct for the circumstances. For major amendments, the Department shall draft findings of compliance with all applicable statewide planning goals. The OTC makes the decision to classify the highway and adopts the findings in the same action.

Outreach for Classification Decisions

Major Amendments: Classification of new or transferred roadways or reclassification of existing routes have system level impacts and shall be implemented as Major Amendments to the OHP. For a Major Amendment, a forty-five day review period is required by federal regulations and a minimum thirty day review period required by the SAC before the OTC hearing on the amendment occurs. Notice for the review period includes providing copies of the classification recommendation and supporting information to stakeholders including affected local governments, DLCDC, other affected agencies, and other interested parties. The forty-five day and thirty day review periods can run concurrently. Notice to DLCDC is directed to the Transportation Planning Coordinator. ODOT Region staff shall include DLCDC's comments in response to the classification proposal in their submittal to the OTC packet. If the Region has been working with the DLCDC field representative, the representative shall be given a courtesy copy of the notice. In addition Motor Carrier Transportation Division has requested timely notice of Major Amendments regarding highway classification decisions.

Minor Amendments: Some classification decisions may have only a minor or local impact on the highway system, in which case they may be processed as Minor Amendments to the OHP. In that situation the OTC decision can be by Consent Agenda approval unless affected parties request it be on the regular agenda for commission discussion.

Staff Reports

The criteria for classification decisions are broad. What is the function of the roadway? What growth pressures and/or land use changes need to be considered? How does the subject highway support the system as a whole? Classification staff reports need to describe the reason for the proposed classification in terms of why the proposed classification fits the subject roadway, how it shall function within the land use context, and how it shall meet transportation system management objectives. For a minor amendment (primarily local affects on the transportation system), a brief staff report with an area map showing the highway segment and a data table establishing beginning and ending milepoints is enough for the OTC classification decision. Staff reports are not adopted in the OTC classification decision.

Findings

Findings are adopted as part of the classification decision. Findings are written statements that explain the basis for a decision and how it complies with applicable plans and legal standards. The SAC (OAR 731-015-0075(7)) says the Department shall make findings about compatibility with local comprehensive plans and applicable Statewide Land Use Planning Goals.

To be upheld on appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals, the Department's findings shall be supported by substantial evidence in the whole record; evidence a reasonable prudent person would rely on in reaching a decision. Findings can not be mere conclusions and

generalizations and shall contain a sufficient statement of facts on which they are based. Findings shall establish a causal or other relationship between the basic facts and the conclusions of law and fact.

Development of the findings includes showing compatibility with the OHP, Oregon Transportation Plan, and other modal and topic plan policies as applicable. The level of detail of the findings may vary according to the complexity of the proposal. The language shall be written carefully, paying close attention to sequence of decision steps, verb tense, findings of fact, and conclusions.