

From: Bob Hillier, Freight Planning Coordinator
Date: April 5, 2010
To: Ginny Peckinpaugh
Cc: John Gillam, Rob Burchfield, Katja Dillmann
Re: N. Lombard (US 30 Bypass)/Columbia Blvd

Ginny,

The issue raised by Chris Duffy at the N/NE Economic Development Initiative Community Advisory Committee about changing the state route designation on N. Lombard Street (US 30 Bypass) to N. Columbia Boulevard/Portland Road is a complex one, so I have provided the following summarization:

- The Portland Freight Master Plan (adopted May 2006) designates N. Lombard Street from MLK Blvd to the North Portland Highway/St. Johns Bridge as a *Traffic Access Street* in the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP). Non-local truck trips are discouraged from using *Traffic Access Streets* as specified in the TSP. However, this designation does not prohibit trucks from traveling on N. Lombard Street since it is difficult to distinguish between local deliveries and through truck movements.
- The Freight Master Plan designates Columbia Blvd from I-205 to the St. Johns Bridge and N. Portland Road from Marine Drive to Columbia Blvd as *Priority Truck Streets* which are designed to accommodate high truck volumes and over-dimensional vehicles. Columbia Blvd and N. Portland Road are also identified as National Highway System (NHS) *Intermodal Connectors* which serve intermodal terminals and interstate commerce. While the travel time and distance is greater than using the Lombard (US 30 Bypass) route, Columbia Blvd via N. Burgard Rd/Lombard Street is the preferred truck route for access to the St. Johns Bridge and Hwy 30.
- Current height restrictions on several existing structures along Columbia Blvd (including a Union Pacific Railroad Bridge and a pedestrian overpass) and other operational and policy constraints force over-dimensional vehicles and other heavy truck traffic through the St. Johns Town Center on US 30 Bypass, rather than taking the preferred route along N. Columbia Blvd. In 2005, ODOT amended the freight designation of the US 30 Bypass in the Oregon Highway Plan to include the following notation: "*The freight route designation on Lombard Street (US 30 Bypass) is for overheight vehicles only and is temporary until the necessary clearance improvements are made to Columbia Boulevard between the St. Johns Bridge and I-5.*" Since then, ODOT has put a procedure in place for transferring the Freight and Truck route designation from the state highway to a local street once the necessary improvements are in place.
- Developing a routing strategy for over-dimensional vehicles and a strategy to transfer the US 30 Bypass designation from Lombard to Columbia Blvd are recommended implementing actions in the Portland Freight Master Plan to improve freight mobility and to enhance community livability in the St. Johns neighborhood.
- One of the main known structural impediments for routing overheight vehicles on Columbia Blvd is the Union Pacific Railroad Bridge located just west of I-5. This bridge currently has a vertical clearance over Columbia Blvd of less than 17 feet and is owned by the UP Railroad. The location of an underground aviation fuel pipeline beneath this

structure limits the ability to improve the vertical clearance by lowering the roadbed. In addition, raising the bridge height would require significant engineering analysis to determine the feasibility and cost of these improvements.

- In March 2009, PBOT submitted a Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Project Application to identify and assess the necessary transportation improvements for accommodating over-dimensional vehicles on Columbia Blvd. The proposed *Columbia-Lombard Corridor Truck Route Improvement Strategy* would have identified the necessary transportation improvements and planning-level cost estimates, including the UP Railroad Bridge, as well as a recommendation on the feasibility of transferring the US 30 Bypass to Columbia Blvd. While this project application was endorsed by the St. Johns neighborhood and business associations, the Portland bicycle, freight and pedestrian advisory committees, it was not selected for funding.
- Another critical project for improving the preferred truck route on Columbia Blvd is the Burgard/Lombard street improvement project. This is identified as a priority project in the Portland Freight Master Plan and would improve safety and truck access by providing two 12-foot travel lanes, a continuous left turn, bike lanes and sidewalks. In 2006, PBOT submitted a Metropolitan Transportation Improvements Project (MTIP) application to fund engineering, final design, and right-of-way acquisition. The MTIP project application was not selected for funding. In 2009, PBOT and the Port of Portland submitted a joint (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant application packet which included an estimated \$17 million for funding construction of the Burgard/Lombard street improvement project. The joint PBOT/Port project application packet was not selected for funding.
- Along with height restrictions for certain sized trucks on Columbia Blvd, the structural integrity of the existing bridge structures may also limit transferring the truck route designation from Lombard (US 30 Bypass) to Columbia Blvd. In 2006, PBOT received MTIP funding for the *N. Portland Rd/Columbia Blvd Intersection Development Plan* to evaluate the feasibility of redesigning this intersection to channel southbound trucks travelling on N. Portland Rd onto Columbia Blvd as the preferred route to the Rivergate Industrial area and the St. Johns Bridge rather than using the local street system. This project will also include an engineering assessment for each of the three Columbia Blvd bridge structures over Columbia Way and the BNSF Railroad to identify current load ratings, structural improvement needs and cost estimates to accommodate an anticipated increase in heavy truck volumes and over-weight loads. PBOT is currently reviewing project proposals and work is anticipating starting by mid 2010 with project completion by early/mid 2011.

Please let me know if you want to meet to discuss this issue in greater detail. Thanks.

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