



## Connecting Transportation & Land Use Planning

# Bypasses

This fact sheet provides a brief description of bypasses and the tools and techniques that local governments can use when planning for, or in place of a bypass.

Bypasses are highways that redirect traffic around an urban area. This provides an alternative route for traffic. The need for a bypass often evolves from increasing congestion and safety problems on a state highway serving as both a regional route and as a main street for a city.

If a new bypass is constructed, new development pressure may be drawn to the areas surrounding the new bypass. The bypass is then increasingly used for local trips rather than through trips and may draw trips away from the existing downtown and business centers. Careful planning is required to ensure the vitality of downtown and business centers when addressing the zoning of land near a proposed bypass facility. To meet these objectives, bypasses require specific policy direction involving the following:

### Access management

A broad set of techniques used to accommodate the access needs of development adjacent to a highway while maintaining a safe flow of traffic and meeting the needs of local residents. Access Management also preserves community character and promotes economic development.

### Road connections

Multiple road connections give drivers multiple route options. Travel is not restricted to one main street, easing congestion on the main street and minimizing the need for a bypass.

### Local street circulation

Local street circulation, such as a grid system, allow vehicles to use local roads for travel, reducing congestion on major streets, and reducing the travel time and distance between points.

### Compatible land uses

Effective zoning of land near and on a bypass reduces congestion and concentrates development in certain areas, reducing the travel distance between points.

### Design characteristics

Access to a bypass should be limited to selected intersections to minimize low-density development and to assure safe travel. A transportation network should be designed to be safe and efficient for all travel modes.

Methods for protecting bypasses involve action of the local government, intergovernmental agreements between the local government and the

state, and actions by the state.

The Oregon Highway Plan provides policy direction for the state's highway system. Policy 1G states that "it is the policy of the State of Oregon to maintain highway performance and improve safety by improving system efficiency and management before adding capacity." Given limited resources, adding new facilities, such as a bypass, is usually a lower priority than improving the efficiency of the existing system.



The northern portion of the Bend Parkway (above) opened in 2001.

## For more information...

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ODOT Bypass Study (2002)  
[www.odot.state.or.us/tdb/planning/highway/bypass/preface.htm](http://www.odot.state.or.us/tdb/planning/highway/bypass/preface.htm)

ODOT Bypass Case Studies (2002)  
[www.odot.state.or.us/tdb/planning/highway/bypass/analysis.htm](http://www.odot.state.or.us/tdb/planning/highway/bypass/analysis.htm)

American Planning Association  
Articles

"From Highway to My Way" (2001)  
[www.planning.org/planningpractice/2001/jan01.htm](http://www.planning.org/planningpractice/2001/jan01.htm)

"Ten Ways to Win with your DOT" (2001)  
[www.planning.org/planningpractice/2001/october011.htm](http://www.planning.org/planningpractice/2001/october011.htm)

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## Examples

### Bend Parkway

The Bend Parkway was completed in 2001 and incorporated the following access and land use management techniques:

*Access control:* Access rights of adjacent land were purchased for the entire length of the Parkway. This assured efficient and safe travel along the Parkway.

*Public road spacing:* The connection and spacing of local roads were carefully designed and are managed through an intergovernmental agreement to maintain the long-term function of the Parkway.

*Coordinated development review:* The city, county, and ODOT work together to review and mitigate development actions that might affect the Parkway.

*Cooperative long-range planning of the transportation system:* The city, county, and ODOT are working closely together on a long-range transportation plan that will include mixed use development, alternative transportation modes, and other measures to maintain the function of the Parkway.

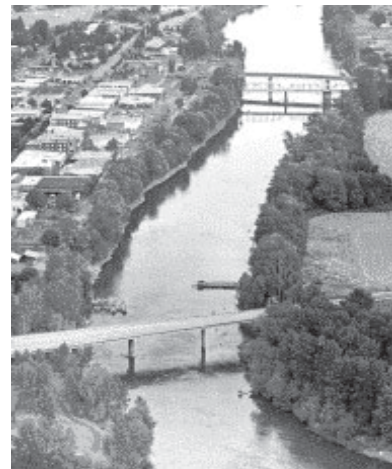
### South Corvallis Bypass

This bypass was built to provide an alternate route for through traffic and to reduce congestion, improve safety, and reduce noise and air pollution in the downtown area.

The bypass:

- Limited additional development and infill of industrial lands in South Corvallis by providing better access.
- Decreased traffic in the downtown Corvallis couplet by 20% after bypass construction.

- Was generally viewed as positive by businesses and residents for reasons of access, capacity, safety, and appearance.
- Induced *no* additional development adjacent to the bypass on the east side of the river.



The bridge at the bottom is the Corvallis bypass. This bypass provides an alternative route while easing congestion in the downtown area.

## Next steps

### Focus investments on preserving and improving existing streets.

Implement projects and programs that aim to concentrate the right treatment, time, place, and cost. These treatments are less expensive, and extend roadway life.

### Make improvements to existing transportation infrastructure.

- Synchronize traffic signals
- Change traffic patterns on some streets
- Construct parking garages to reduce the amount of land devoted to parking
- Invest in transit or shuttle buses
- Take steps to make areas more walkable and bikeable, such as adding bike racks and pedestrian amenities

### Promote open space preservation in rural areas. Smart Growth

planning in rural areas will stop sprawl and reduce the need for a bypass. This will also direct development to developed areas to preserve open spaces.

**Develop inter-jurisdiction agreements.** Partner with counties, towns, and other agencies to address congestion problems in rural and environmentally sensitive areas through better land use planning and carefully designed operational improvements.

**Obtain public input.** Hold public meetings, organize workshops, and take other steps to enable citizens to make transportation decisions in partnership with city and state officials.

### Develop and adopt:

- Interchange management plans
- Access management plans
- Master plans in the vicinity of the bypass and its interchanges

**Defer or redesign projects that subsidize sprawl.** Verify that proper local planning and zoning is in place so that a project is properly designed to fix a specific problem without causing more problems.

### Implement new or change existing ordinances that provide for:

- Street connectivity in the vicinity of the bypass
- Design ordinances for any interchanges or intersections with the bypass
- Consider re-planning and re-zoning areas to maximize existing facilities
- Consider reducing cul-de-sacs or other interrupted street networks that cause reliance on the bypass for local trips

Because the circumstances in each community vary, the application of each policy and improvements must be specifically fitted to the community.

Developed by graduate students in the School of Urban Studies and Planning, College of Urban and Public Affairs, Portland State University, June 2003

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