

Franklin Boulevard Study Problem Statement

Franklin Boulevard is the major east-west route within the Glenwood community and one of only four east-west arterials in the region that connect Eugene and Springfield. It is an important gateway to Eugene, downtown Springfield, the University of Oregon, and Glenwood. Franklin Boulevard is a five lane roadway with frequent business accesses and bus rapid transit service that operates in mixed traffic. The corridor has sidewalks in some places, but they are narrow and often located on private property or easements.

The Glenwood area, the City of Springfield's first urban renewal district, is poised for extensive redevelopment. The principal focus for redevelopment has been near the intersection of Franklin Boulevard and the McVay Highway. The proposals for this area, first outlined in the Glenwood Riverfront Plan, favor higher density, mixed-use development oriented toward the river. In their present form, neither Franklin Boulevard nor McVay Highway support these redevelopment goals. Limited transportation dollars combined with the high cost of facility improvements will make these improvements a challenge to deliver.

The current condition and appearance of both corridors is widely perceived as an impediment to the area's economic renewal. Franklin Boulevard's visual environment is defined by frequent access points, unappealing and competing signage, minimal landscaping, inefficient land development and unorganized parking. The Willamette River, a significant environmental asset, is largely ignored and disconnected from the adjacent corridors and neighborhoods.

The existing Franklin Boulevard right-of-way is constrained. Any future improvements will require widening the right-of-way, and any widening of Franklin Boulevard will require property acquisition. Some owners of existing businesses are concerned that improvements will either deprive their property of all economic value or devalue their property by making it unsuitable to current uses. Some residents and property owners are concerned that plans that encourage redevelopment of parcels and relocation of current uses will change the community fabric and ultimately harm Glenwood. Many stakeholders are excited about redevelopment opportunities in Glenwood and see improvements to Franklin Boulevard as an important way to invigorate the area.

Franklin Boulevard serves a wide-range of transportation modes including through and local car and truck traffic, transit, bikes and pedestrians in a constrained right-of-way. In the future, Franklin Boulevard will continue to be a key regional arterial and will need to accommodate 30,000-35,000 cars and trucks each day and offer sufficient mobility and accessibility to support growth in both local and regional traffic, as well as a substantial increase in bike and pedestrian trips. McVay Highway will need to accommodate a similar mix of local and through trips. Both corridors have a variety of access management, parking, connectivity, safety and operational issues that require correction or improvement.

The intersections of Franklin Boulevard and the McVay Highway and Franklin Boulevard and Glenwood Boulevard will need to accommodate anticipated increased traffic volumes. The McVay Highway/Franklin Boulevard intersection today is a "T" configuration; in the future, a fourth intersection leg is planned to allow for access north into the riverfront area. The Glenwood Boulevard/Franklin Boulevard intersection is the area's gateway from I-5 and will need to accommodate traffic generated from new uses in the broader area including the Glenwood Riverfront and a proposed University of Oregon basketball arena.

Franklin Boulevard is a bus rapid transit corridor, where buses operate in mixed traffic. Lane Transit District has built temporary bus rapid transit stations that can be replaced in their current locations or rebuilt in new locations. Any design for the corridor must accommodate bus rapid transit stations that support future land uses.