

Freight Parking Analysis for the Hood River Waterfront



Presented to:

Port of Hood River

Prepared by:

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

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Executive Summary

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District conducted a parking study on behalf of the Port of Hood River to investigate the use of roadways owned by the Port for commercial truck and trailer parking, specifically those delivering freight to local businesses. In addition, the study attempted to get feedback from regional businesses regarding impacts if parking at the Port for commercial trucks was limited or no longer an option. The Port of Hood River requested the study to inform future decisions related to use of its properties. The parking study indicated that dedicated parking for commercial trucks and trailers is important for companies bringing goods to the region and is increasingly hard to find. In addition, if parking were limited or no longer available, delivery costs to businesses would likely increase, meaning a decrease to local business profit margins or increases in the costs of goods sold by those businesses.

Introduction

The Port of Hood River (Port) owns several properties and roadways in the Hood River waterfront area. With an increase in industry and popularity of the waterfront area, the Port is seeking information to help them make decisions regarding use and balance competing interests. One of those interests is parking of commercial trucks and trailers. Currently, the Port has lease agreements with several freight trucking companies that allow them to park their trucks and trailers on Port roadways. The Port would like to better understand how important parking is to these companies, what types of products are being delivered locally by these companies and the impacts to the companies as



well as local businesses if parking were no longer available. This report contains the results of a first-phase investigation conducted by staff from the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD). The goal was to gather information from freight trucking companies and local businesses about possible concerns or impacts if the current locations for parking were no longer available.

Methodology

The main objective of this study was to conduct a survey of freight companies and their customers in the Hood River area. The goal was to gather information about use of Port properties by freight companies to help determine the importance of Port property for local delivery of goods. Staff from the Port worked with MCEDD staff to identify a list of 12 freight companies that provide services to the area and prioritized the list to indicate which companies to target first. The companies identified were:

- CRG Freight
- Estes Express Lines
- FedEx
- Oak Harbor Freight Lines
- Old Dominion Freight Line
- Peninsula Trucking
- Reddaway
- Roadrunner Transportation Services
- Ryan's Juice/Little King Trucking
- Tofurkey/Turtle Island Foods
- XPO Logistics
- YRC Freight



The goal was to interview a minimum of three companies. Port and MCEDD staff also developed a list of questions to ask each company (Appendix A).

For the business interviews, again MCEDD staff worked with the Port to develop a list of survey questions (Appendix B). To identify businesses to interview, MCEDD staff used information from the freight company interviews to develop a list. Freight companies were asked what businesses they made deliveries to and to estimate the percentage of deliveries they typically made to each local area (Hood River waterfront, City of Hood River, White Salmon/Bingen, other local areas). The responses regarding businesses were often generic (i.e., grocery stores, breweries) but were used along with delivery locations to develop a list of businesses to target. Staff also targeted small to large businesses from multiple industry types. The goal was to interview a minimum of five businesses.

Results

Freight Company Interviews

MCEDD staff contacted and interviewed four freight companies - FedEx, YRC Freight, Peninsula Trucking, and Oak Harbor Freight Lines. The remainder of the companies were not contacted as part of this study.

In general, most interviewees could not provide specific details for all of the questions on the survey. They did not have knowledge of areas used for parking or route details, as that tended to be knowledge at the driver level. Interviewees were asked to follow up with drivers and send additional details via email. Most did not respond to the request.

Based on responses, freight companies have been using the waterfront area for parking for a number of years, with 24 years being the longest reported. Interviewees indicated that the

locations chosen for parking were dictated by the lease agreements with the Port. All of the companies stated that trucks come from Portland on I-84 and use local roads for deliveries.

The four companies reported bringing out product for delivery anywhere from three to five days per week, with the majority making trips five days per week. They all use the waterfront area for parking trailers, including hooking and unhooking trailers from trucks. There are two main scenarios companies use for parking and delivery of products:

Freight companies have been using the waterfront area for parking for years and a majority report bringing out loads for delivery on a daily basis.

1. A driver hauls two full trailers to Hood River from Portland, drops one of the trailers at the waterfront, delivers products in the other trailer, goes back to the waterfront and swaps trailers, delivers products from the second trailer, goes back to the waterfront and picks up the first trailer and drives back to Portland.
2. A driver brings a full trailer to Hood River from Portland, drops the trailer at the waterfront, and picks up an empty trailer that was brought out the day before. A local driver will pick up the full trailer, make deliveries, and drop the empty trailer back at the waterfront.

The freight companies reported delivering to a variety of businesses in Hood River, Odell/Parkdale, The Dalles, and to cities on the Washington side as far as Goldendale. The largest percentage of deliveries (70%+) are made to businesses in Hood River (Figure 1).

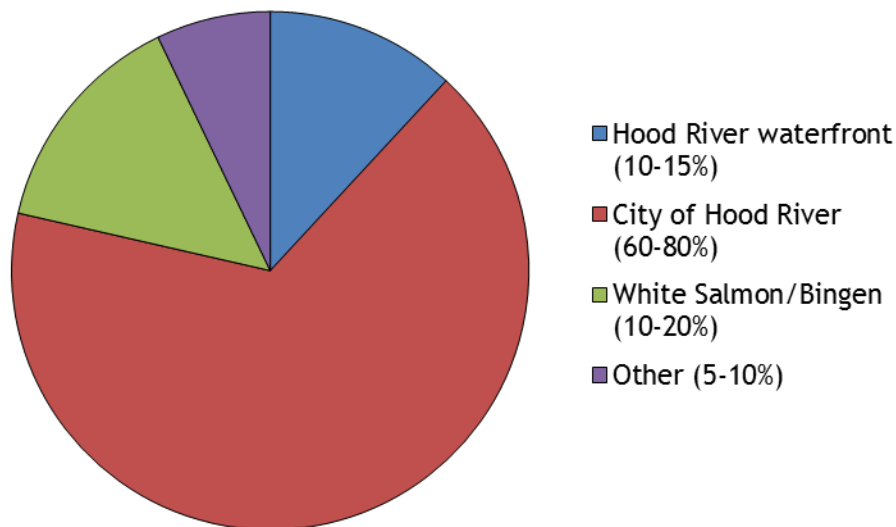


Figure 1. Average percentage of deliveries to locations in the local area.

Types of businesses that interviewees reported making deliveries to included food and drink manufacturers, the City of Hood River, medical/health organizations, parts stores, grocery stores, other retailers, and agriculture producers.

All freight companies highlighted the importance of the waterfront area for parking for local deliveries. They cited an increasing lack of truck/trailer parking in most areas they deliver to in the state despite their willingness to pay parking fees. The waterfront parking location is beneficial because it is centrally located and allows room for hooking/unhooking trailers. If parking were not available, all stated they would need to find an alternate location in the area or they would have to suspend/cancel services or use more drivers/make more trips from the Portland area, which would increase costs. Companies responded that any alternate parking locations would need to have the same parameters (access, security, space and cost) as current parking location. YRC Freight mentioned that their local driver had participated in an effort about a year ago to look for acceptable parking locations and the waterfront area was the best choice.

Freight companies indicated that the waterfront area is an ideal location for parking because it is centrally located and has adequate space for maneuvering.

There were various responses to whether or not each company would be willing to work with a collaborative to build a parking/transfer facility. Most indicated that the issue would need to be discussed with a different department or management. One company was not interested as they could not absorb the cost.

Local Business Interviews

MCEDD staff contacted nine local businesses and was able to get a response to interview requests from five (Table 1).

Table 1. List of local businesses contacted for interviews.

Business	Result	Location	Sector
Diamond Fruit Growers	Interviewed	Upper Valley	Agriculture
Full Sail Brewery	Interviewed	Hood River – downtown	Manufacturing
Hood River Distillers	No response	Hood River - waterfront	Manufacturing
Hood River Supply	No response	Hood River Heights	Retail
Indian Creek Golf Course	No response	Hood River Heights	Recreation
Klickitat Valley Health	No response	Washington	Health Care
Mid-Columbia Center for Living	Interviewed	Hood River Heights	Health Care
pFriem Family Brewers	Interviewed	Hood River - waterfront	Manufacturing
Rosauers Supermarkets	Interviewed	Hood River Heights	Retail

In the course of the business interviews, it became clear that local businesses who receive freight deliveries do not choose the freight company making the delivery. With the exception of Rosauers, local businesses get deliveries from the freight company that is selected by the shipper (i.e., the supplier they purchased from) and may include FedEx, YRC Freight, Oak Harbor and Peninsula Trucking. Rosauers gets most of its deliveries from its parent company, URM, but will occasionally receive shipments from a different freight company for items not for sale in the store (i.e., displays, freezer cases). Again, those deliveries are made by the company that is selected by the shipper.

Most of the businesses typically receive freight one or two times a week and deliveries include supplies necessary to the operation of the business – office supplies, furniture, medical equipment and supplies, box liners, paper products, maintenance supplies, brewery supplies, glassware. Businesses reported receiving freight deliveries at their locations for the last several decades, but could not say it was always delivered by any one particular company.

Most businesses interviewed either do not ship anything out via freight or ship very rarely. The two breweries mentioned do have product that is shipped via freight on a daily basis, but contracting for shipments is handled by brokers or distributors and not directly by the business interviewed.

Businesses reported typical challenges with respect to current freight deliveries – delay in shipments, miscommunications, deliveries being made when no one is there to receive them (unsecured shipments), weather affecting delivery times. One business reported it can take more than a day to get orders coming out of Yakima, WA, because the orders are first sent to Portland, OR. Another reported it can be difficult to coordinate specific times for delivery. If they are unsure if staff will be available on a day a shipment is expected to arrive, they will have their shipments delivered to a local moving company and pay to have the moving company deliver to their office.

Businesses were asked about the impact to their operations if their current freight deliveries stopped, changed or increased in cost. Since they do not contract for delivery services – that is decided by the shipper- they indicated they would look for suppliers that could make the deliveries as ordered, perhaps requiring additional planning time. None of them have the capacity to store additional inventory and cannot make less frequent orders because of this. If costs increased, it

Local businesses rely on regular freight deliveries because they don't have the capacity to store more in inventory and make less frequent, larger orders.

would drive up operating costs, which could affect the profits of the business or be passed on to the customers or suppliers.

Summary

While there are limitations to the data collected and how it informs this report, it is valuable in understanding the current use of Port of Hood River properties for commercial truck and trailer parking. There are challenges for freight companies in finding safe and secure parking for trucks and trailers, despite their willingness to pay for space. Most of the companies interviewed bring goods out and deliver to the Hood River area five days a week, indicating that local deliveries would likely be impacted, whether that be an increase in costs, less frequent deliveries, or fewer companies that can deliver, if parking were not available in the Hood River area. Companies are unaware of alternate parking locations in the area, but are open to new locations as long as they meet their needs in terms of proximity to the freeway, accessibility, space, and security.

Freight companies are increasingly facing challenges in finding suitable locations for parking in places like Hood River where companies use the area as a base point for sending out final deliveries.

On the local business side, they wouldn't notice impacts in contracting for freight services as it seems most don't directly contract for freight services for shipping and don't choose how deliveries arrive. However, they would likely see impacts related to limited availability of products that could be shipped directly to their business and/or increased shipping costs.

As this study was a brief first-phase exploration to identify key concerns, impacts, and possible solutions, this report does not provide recommendations to the Port regarding actions to take based on the results. The Port may want to consider collecting additional data, including details on alternate parking locations that companies have considered, if any, input from drivers using local areas for parking and making deliveries, and input from shippers/suppliers that use freight companies for local deliveries of their products.

Appendix A. List of interview questions for freight trucking companies.

Functionality:

Please describe the activities of your business at the Hood River waterfront.

- How long has your company used the waterfront for truck/trailer parking?
- Which streets are being used (and why those streets and not others)?
- What specific activities occur there?
- How are transfers occurring? (i.e., smaller truck grabbing a trailer, materials being unloaded/loaded into smaller trucks/delivery vehicles, etc.)

Deliveries:

- Identify the routes most frequently used – both routes for bringing freight to the waterfront and routes to deliver freight to local businesses.
- What types of local businesses do you deliver to? Do you pick up from any businesses?
- Can you list some of your business customers in the area?
- About what percentage of your deliveries are to:
 - Businesses on the Hood River waterfront
 - Businesses in Hood River
 - Businesses in Washington – White Salmon/Bingen
 - Other
- Does freight dropped off at the Hood River waterfront get delivered outside the immediate area and if so, where?
- Overall, how important is the Hood River waterfront for your company's local deliveries? For regional deliveries? Why?

Impact if restricted in the future:

- What impact would it have to your local deliveries if the Hood River waterfront was no longer available for your use?
- If there was an alternative parking location proposed, what criteria would be necessary for that site to work for your company? (proximity to freeway, turning radius, lighting, security, cost, etc.)
- If an acceptable site were available, would you be interested in working with a collaborative to build a parking/transfer facility?

Appendix B. List of interview questions for local businesses.

- What freight company do you use?
- How often do you get freight deliveries to your business (i.e., daily, a few times a week, not on a regular schedule)? What about shipping items out – how often?
- What types of products do you have delivered via freight?
- How long has your business used [company] for freight delivery?
- Are you encountering any challenges/limitations with your current freight delivery/shipping?
- How would it affect your business if the current freight deliveries were to:
 - Stop
 - Change schedules – either different delivery times or less frequent deliveries
 - Increase in cost
- Do you have alternate options for delivery or shipping? i.e., different company, capacity to store more inventory and get freight deliveries on a less frequent schedule.