

5.7 AIR, RAIL, WATERWAYS, AND PIPELINES

PUBLIC AIR FACILITIES

The Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport is located north of the I-5/Highway 62 interchange in southwestern Oregon on 855 acres adjacent to the city of Medford, Oregon's central business district. The Airport serves the Southern Oregon/Northern California region, with the majority of the Airport's users residing within Jackson County. In 2013, over 631,000 passengers used air transportation and aircraft operations totaled over 40,000.

The management system at the Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport consists of an Airport Advisory Committee/Director System. The Airport Advisory Committee is comprised of nine members appointed by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. The goal of the committee is to act as an advisory board to the County Commissioners working through the Airport Director on matters of public concern.

The Ashland Municipal Airport was established in 1965. The City owns all of the land and buildings on the airport with the exception of the privately owned hangars at the northeast edge of the field and the Sky Research Hangar built in 2000. The airport has 34 hangars, 120 tie-down spaces and supports about 85 based aircraft. Management decisions for the Airport and related facilities receive oversight and recommendations through the Airport Commission, and staff work is completed through the Public Works Administrative Division.

PRIVATE AIR FACILITIES

Burrill Airport is a private Airport located 7 miles north of Medford in the RVMPO boundary. There are no other private airports or airstrips exist within the Planning Area. There are several other private airstrips within 20 miles of the RVMPO boundary.

FREIGHT RAIL

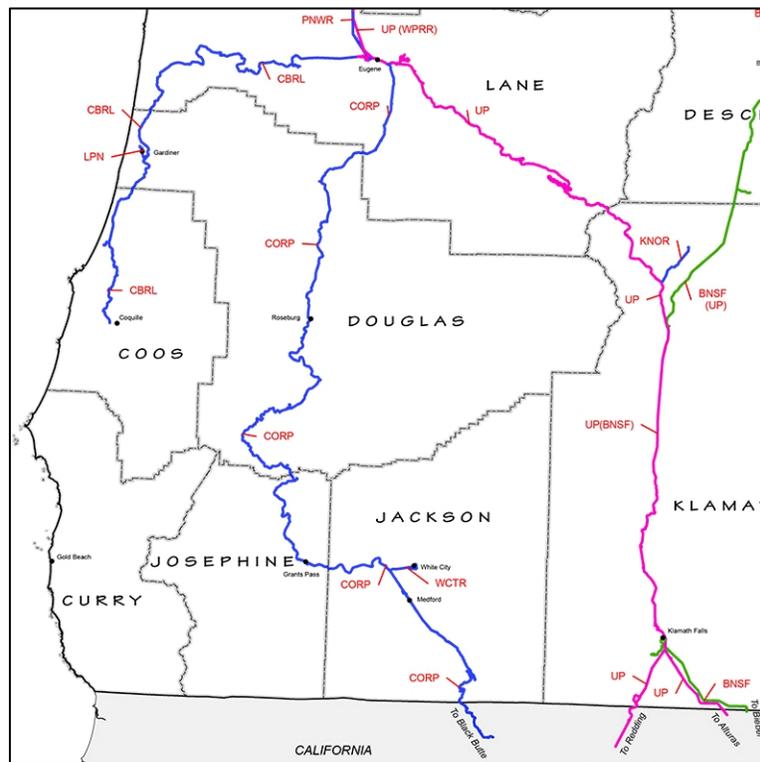
The Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) is a Class II railroad (determined by revenue) that operates between Northern California and Eugene, Oregon with interchanges to the Coos Bay Rail Link, Union Pacific, White City Transfer Rail, and the Yreka Western Railroad. Traffic on CORP is approximately 16,000 cars predominately moving lumber, logs and plywood of national account lumber companies. Within the Planning Area, the rail line primarily follows parallel to Highway 99, running from the north to south boundaries of the MPO.

The Rogue Valley Terminal Railroad is a 14-mile shortline railroad that connects White City, Oregon, to a junction north of Medford with the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad, which hauls its cars to the Union Pacific Railroad at Eugene, Oregon or Black Butte, California via the Siskiyou Summit, or to the Yreka Western Railroad at Montague, California.

The line began operations on November 3, 1954 on an abandoned Southern Pacific Transportation Company right-of-way as the White City Terminal & Utilities Co., on March 15, 2013 the railroad was renamed Rogue Valley Terminal Railroad Corporation.

The Siskiyou rail line is part of CORP, extending from Weed, California to Eugene, Oregon. The Siskiyou line has not been used since 2008. However, construction to upgrade the rail line is expected to be completed by Fall 2016. The reopening of this section of line is expected to renew and improve interstate freight rail options. It will allow Southern Oregon access to the Union Pacific mainline at Weed, California (access currently diverted through Eugene) and provide transportation options for the delivery of Southern Oregon lumber and manufactured goods.

Figure 5.7.1: Southwest Oregon Rail Lines



PASSENGER RAIL

There is no passenger rail service within the Planning Area. The nearest Amtrak train station is located in Klamath Falls, approximately 80 miles from Medford. Amtrak (Amtrak Cascades and Coast Starlight services) stops in Eugene and travels both north to Vancouver, British Columbia, and south to San Diego, California (Coast Starlight train only). Currently, both Greyhound and Southwest POINT shuttle provide service from Medford to the Amtrak station in Klamath Falls.

From 2001 to 2007, the RVMPO, had commissioned a number of studies examining commuter rail service using the CORP line between Ashland and Central Point,

including an extension to Grants Pass. Additionally, in 2010, ODOT had published the Intercity Passenger Rail Assessment that included examining the feasibility of Eugene to Ashland intercity passenger rail service using the CORP line. The conclusions of all studies noted challenges primarily related to costs vs. estimated passenger numbers, as well as delays associated with CORP priority for freight with construction of a new rail line being cost prohibitive.

More recently, passenger rail service to the MPO is discussed in the Oregon State Rail Plan (2014), which notes that out of travel markets not currently served by passenger rail, Southern Oregon (specifically, MRMPO to/from RVMPO) has good potential given its high percentage of interregional travel. This is based on data analyzed from the Oregon Household Activity Survey.

AT-GRADE RAIL CROSSINGS

The majority of the rail crossings in the Planning Area are at-grade, with the exception of the following:

- I-5 south of Ashland
- Ashland Street at Clay Street
- Water Street at Van Ness Avenue
- Jackson Road at Highway 99
- Highway 99 at Jackson Road
- McAndrews at Oak Street
- Rossanly Drive near Central Avenue
- I-5 north of Central Point

At-grade crossings can cause conflicts between trains and vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists, as well as delays for roadway users, especially during peak traffic periods.

WATERWAYS

The Rogue River is the only navigable waterway within Planning Area boundaries. Within the Planning Area, the river is used for active and passive recreation. The river is currently not used for commercial navigation.

PIPELINES

The Rogue Valley is served by one pipeline, a natural gas line managed locally by Avista Corporation. While national security risks prevent Avista from providing detail about the location of the facility, the pipeline originally extended from Portland to Medford. A subsequent project connected Medford to a line that crosses central Oregon, permitting a loop system to exist. The value of completing a loop system was confirmed when the original line was disabled by an explosion near Wolf Creek, yet service to the Rogue Valley remained uninterrupted.

