

Tekoa Truck Route

Since the last Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) was adopted by the RTPO Board in 2010, a need has arisen in Tekoa to find a solution to the truck traffic on Hwy. 27 through downtown. To this end, a grant was obtained to study the issue and to make recommendations for alleviating the problem that has existed for years, but will increase dramatically with the completion of the McCoy Grain Terminal in north Whitman County.

The Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) granted monies to Tekoa to engage an engineering firm to complete a feasibility and economic study of the project. This project was completed late summer, and WSDOT is being asked to include it on the upcoming release of an updated State Freight Plan.

The project needs to be listed on the RTP to have any chance to be included. The following paragraph is a draft proposed addition to the Plan to be inserted in the report as one of the 'Region's Key Issues' on page 36, after the 'US 12 in Clarkston' listing.

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The City of Tekoa will build a dedicated truck route shifted an average 1- ½ blocks to the west of the current main street state route where SR 27 currently passes thru on Crosby Street. The State Highway enters the City on the north end and turns right on Crosby Street over a bridge across Hangman Creek. Crosby Street then climbs a two tier incline of 14% to the center of the City thru the central business district. At the end of the business district the highway has a stop sign, turns right downhill to another stop sign. The highway then turns left and curves around to the west, crosses Hangman Creek again and climbs out of town towards Oakesdale. The City proposes to build a dedicate truck route that would branch off of SR 27 just after the north Hangman Creek bridge and build on the abandoned Union Pacific right-of-way at grade level thru an old industrial area and merge back into SR 27 just before crossing the south Hangman Creek bridge. This route will avoid the steep hills in the business district.

The Tekoa Truck Route project was inserted into the Palouse RTPO RTP in the fall of 2013, after the conclusion of a study performed on behalf of the City of Tekoa, completed in June 2013. The study was necessitated by the number of trucks that regularly use the Crosby Street (SR 27) route through town for hauling agricultural equipment and products. The excessive steepness of the hill approaches to travel through town, the tight 90 degree turns that are required to be navigated by increasingly large loads, the increased number of loads traveling through town, coupled with the amount of school and pedestrian traffic is an increasingly critical problem to remedy. Updated traffic counts were made in August of 2012, confirming the significant volumes of trucks navigating this challenging portion of SR 27. Truck volumes are anticipated to go up substantially with the \$20 million investment in the McCoy Grain Terminal near Rosalia that will use this route to avoid

Spokane. Preliminary design and cost estimates from the study indicate a need for \$3.5 to \$6.5 million in funding to complete a truck route, depending upon the solution determined to be optimal.

Staff recommendation is for the RTPO policy Board to adopt the requested amendment to the current RTP.