



LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION STRATEGY

Providing Mobility for a New Century . . .

. . . requires an extended vision of the future and the challenges that it will bring. A long-range transportation strategy provides a general philosophy and policy framework that will guide the development of the Salem transportation system beyond the traditional 20- to 25-year planning horizon found in most infrastructure plans. A long-range transportation strategy allows the City to make strategic-level decisions regarding growth and the eventual build-out of the existing Salem Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

A long-range vision provides a valuable measure of freedom from the Federal rules of fiscal constraint and regional consistency that are required within the 25-year planning window. Issues that deal with build-out, future river crossings, and urban form are ones that can best be addressed outside of these constraints.

Long-range Assumptions

Preparing a long-range strategy requires making a number of broad assumptions concerning future conditions in Salem. The following are a few basic assumptions:

- Although significant strides will be made in the use of alternative travel modes, such as transit, walking, bicycling, and carpooling, it is assumed that the most common form of transportation will remain the personal or family vehicle. The power source for these vehicles is not particularly relevant for this discussion.
- It is assumed that the economy of Salem and the Pacific Northwest will remain healthy enough to result in continued population and employment growth. The 20 years after 2030 may see a less rapid growth rate.
- For planning purposes, it is assumed that the regional UGB will stay essentially the same as it is now, with few, if any, expansions.

Long-range Issues

The following issues will require serious consideration by our community in order to make our transportation system function as we approach build-out of the existing Salem UGB:

FUTURE GROWTH AND ITS TRAFFIC IMPACTS

- How will the street system accommodate the growth in traffic expected over the very long term?
- Can we ever build our way out of traffic congestion?

STREET IMPROVEMENTS

- How much pavement is acceptable to the community before it significantly impacts the character and livability of the community we are trying to serve?
- How much pavement can we afford to build and maintain over the long term?
- Should we set limits as to how wide a street can become?



TRANSIT AND ALTERNATIVE MODES

- Over the long term, will other modes of travel, such as transit, carpooling, bicycling, and walking, be able to adequately pick up an increased share of overall travel demand to help alleviate congestion and reduce road widenings?
- What kind of transit service should we have over the long term?

URBAN FORM

- What kind of urban form should Salem attain as we approach existing UGB build-out? Vehicle-oriented? More or less dense?
- Can the demand for transportation services truly be affected by a long term change in urban form?

RIVER CROSSINGS

- What demand for additional Willamette River crossings will exist over the long term?
- Should we build additional river crossings? If so, how many? Where should they be located? How can they be financed?

REGIONAL GROWTH

- As Salem develops closer to its UGB, will growth in surrounding communities create an additional burden on our transportation system?
- How do we best serve the growing transportation needs of these communities?

The answers to many of these questions require a level of comprehensive planning beyond the scope of any one single plan. Ideally, the *Salem Area Comprehensive Plan* should have been revised prior to, or concurrent with, the development of the *Salem Transportation System Plan*. Many of the concepts outlined in this long-range strategy will require further attention in future revisions to the Comprehensive Plan. In fact, some of these issues essentially require a regional approach to planning and problem-solving. Despite these limitations, it is important that Salem has a long-range transportation strategy to provide interim guidance until resources are available to address other comprehensive issues. This long-range strategy should be considered a basis for developing future plans and policies.

Guiding Principles of the Long-range Transportation Strategy

The City of Salem shall incorporate the following goal and principles in planning for its long-range transportation system:

GOAL: A long-term transportation strategy that guides Salem toward eventual build-out of its existing UGB, through principles aimed at providing mobility, accessibility, and developing efficient and livable urban form.



MOBILITY

Urban Standard Streets

1. The City shall make it a priority to bring the arterial and collector street system within the Salem Urban Area up to urban design standards, having such features as curbs, sidewalks, corner curb ramps, bicycle lanes, drainage, and illumination. Local streets should be improved to urban standards, as feasible and appropriate.

Efficient Regional Transit Service

2. The City shall support the development of a transit system that, over the long term, will provide a level of service that can accommodate the travel demands expected over the long term. The city will need to be served by a system of buses that have short headways and provide a system of direct and convenient connections to employment, retail, institutional, and educational centers. The city's street system will need the transit system to help relieve its capacity deficiencies by providing express transit service during peak travel periods. Express transit routes should be served by a series of park and ride facilities.
3. The City shall support the development of an expanded transit system that provides frequent service to outlying satellite communities such as: Woodburn, Silverton, Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Turner, Sublimity, Stayton, Aumsville, and others. The City shall also support the development of frequent and convenient intercity passenger services that connect the Salem-Keizer region to the Portland metropolitan area, Coast, and other Willamette Valley cities.

Arterial Street Width

4. The City shall limit its arterial streets to a total cross section of no more than five lanes wide. Some intersections may need to exceed the five-lane standard. State facilities and those roads classified as Freeways and Parkways may also need to exceed this standard. Travel demand that would require the exceedence of five-lane arterial cross sections should be accommodated through increased transit service, demand management techniques, and alternative travel modes. Applications of technology and access control should be used to maximize the capacity of the existing and planned street system.

Willamette River Crossings

5. The City shall work with the Oregon Department of Transportation to first identify what types of capacity and seismic improvements can and should be made to the existing Center Street and Marion Street Bridges. Secondly, the City shall work with the State and other regional jurisdictions to identify the need for additional river crossings over the next 20 to 40 years. If such a need is justified, the location of additional river crossings should be identified. The type of crossing method should then be determined. Finally, the method of finance for construction and operation should be identified and pursued.

Off-street Facilities

6. The City shall explore the feasibility of establishing exclusive rights-of-way for future high capacity transit operations and the development of a system of off-street bicycling and walking pathways or trails.



TRANSPORTATION-SUPPORTIVE URBAN FORM

Activity Subcenters

7. The City shall support the continued development of the Central Salem core area as the focal point of the community, while creating opportunities for employment and retail centers outside of the downtown that will spread travel demand more uniformly throughout the urban area, easing pressure on Salem's radial arterial streets. These activity centers should be served extensively by transit services.

Mixed Use Developments

8. The City shall facilitate the development of mixed use developments that reduce automobile dependence and encourage walking, bicycling, and transit ridership. This can be accomplished through revisions to the *Salem Area Comprehensive Plan* and *Salem Revised Code*. Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code maps should identify where mixed use developments can be located. They should be located where they can be best supported by the overall city transportation system.

Increased Residential Densities

9. Through future amendments to the *Salem Area Comprehensive Plan*, the City shall provide opportunities for increased residential densities in locations that support increased use of alternative travel modes, especially transit.

Local Street Connectivity

10. The City shall require subdivision and development plans to provide local street connections to neighborhood activity centers, such as parks, schools, and neighborhood retail centers, thus reducing automobile demand and promoting walking and bicycling. Accessibility to transit service shall be provided via connections to streets designated as transit routes.

RECOMMENDED LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Street System

As the Salem Urban Area develops closer to its existing UGB, increased traffic will require additional expansions to those facilities identified in the 20-year Street System Element. The future will see continued growth in the number of automobiles and trucks, including a greater number of transit vehicles, all trying to use the same street system. Although capacity improvements will still be necessary, the long-range street system will look essentially the same as it is now. No new arterial street routes are recommended to be added to the system with the exception of those needed to serve future Willamete River bridges.

Long-range Strategy Principle No. 4 states that the city's arterial streets should not exceed five lanes in width, except at some major intersections, freeways, and parkways. The result will be a mature arterial street system that relies on transit and alternative modes to carry the remainder of future traffic demand. This maturation of the street system is expected to be completed beyond the time frame of the 20-year Detailed Plan.



Part of the maturation process for the street system will include the introduction of grade-separated interchanges at selected intersections on the highest level streets in the system. However, these interchanges will be relatively few in number. The introduction of an additional Willamette River crossing(s) may occur during the long-range horizon. Additional streets and ramps may also be required to connect this facility (or facilities), to the Salem street system.

Recommended Long-range Street System Improvements

Based on long-range traffic capacity and safety analysis, the following improvements may be necessary during the 20-year period beyond the Year 2030:

Highway 22 Corridor (includes Mission Street SE and Pringle Parkway SE)

It is recommended that Highway 22 become a limited access facility along its entire length through the Salem Urban Area. It is envisioned that:

- A new interchange will exist at Highway 22 and Cordon Road SE. This interchange should become part of an interconnected system of grade-separated interchanges at Cordon Road SE, Lancaster Drive SE, Interstate 5, and Hawthorne Avenue SE.
- Driveway accesses will be entirely eliminated along the section of Mission Street SE between Hawthorne Avenue SE and Church Street SE. A system of frontage roads may be necessary to provide access to properties lacking frontage on side streets.
- Pringle Parkway SE and the Trade Street SE/Ferry Street SE couplet will remain essentially as they are today, with no new accesses permitted. On-street parking on Ferry Street SE will be permanently removed to facilitate traffic flow.
- The existing Marion Street and Center Street Bridges will be reconfigured to eliminate weaving movements that reduce effective bridge capacity. The ramp systems at either end of the bridges will be configured so that movements are free from stop controls. The intersection of Edgewater Street NW and Wallace Road NW will be eliminated and replaced with a free-flowing design.
- A new interchange will need to be constructed at or near the southern terminus of Eola Drive NW at Edgewater Street NW. This will allow direct access from Highway 22 to Eola Drive NW, a minor arterial street, and the long term growth areas of West Salem. This new interchange will replace the existing interchange at Rosemont Avenue NW, eliminating an obsolete interchange design and problematic left-hand merge onto the highway. A method should be studied to see how both Eola Drive NW and Rosemont Avenue NW can both be better served by one interchange.
- New grade-separated interchanges will be needed at the intersections of Highway 22 and Doaks Ferry Road NW and the western terminus of Edgewater Street NW. These interchanges will need to be connected, where feasible, by a system of parallel frontage roads to eliminate direct access onto the highway.

The entire length of Highway 22 within the Salem Urban Area is scheduled to be studied as part of a future State corridor study. The recommendations mentioned above will be studied in further detail and a determination made as to their feasibility, benefit, and estimated costs.



Circumferential Travel Route (Includes: Kuebler Boulevard S/SE, Cordon Road SE/NE, Hazelgreen Road NE, Chemawa Road NE, and Salem Parkway NE)

It is recommended that all the streets constituting the circumferential travel route become limited access facilities. It is envisioned that:

- No new at-grade intersections will be permitted on Salem Parkway NE. No additional traffic signals or other stop controls will be installed that would impede the flow of traffic on this facility.
- Kuebler Boulevard SE will be improved to a Parkway design between Interstate 5 and Liberty Road S having four travel lanes and a landscaped median. Bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and/or separate pedestrian paths will be incorporated into the design. A new grade-separated interchange may exist at the intersection of Kuebler Boulevard SE and Commercial Street SE, possibly linked to a partial interchange at Sunnyside Road SE.
- Kuebler Boulevard S, although classified as a Parkway, will be improved to a modified Minor Arterial design west of Liberty Road S having two travel lanes, separated by a paved or raised median between street intersections. The design will also include bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and provisions for limiting access.

In the future, there may be a need to continue the circumferential travel route north from Kuebler Boulevard S to a possible future Willamette River crossing (see discussion of Southern Alignment in following section). This route could generally follow the existing alignment of Viewcrest Drive S.

- The circumferential travel route may extend west to West Salem from the Salem Parkway across a possible future Willamette River crossing (see discussion of Northern Alignment in following section). The specific alignment of such an extension would require additional analysis.

Future Willamette River Crossings

- Purpose and Need—Results of the Rivercrossing Study Phase I demonstrate that future travel demand will greatly exceed the capacity of the existing Willamette River bridges. One or more additional rivercrossings will be needed in the long-term future, as well as aggressive improvements in alternative travel modes, to accommodate regional travel demand and circulation needs. The purpose of a future river crossing(s) would be to relieve current and future traffic congestion on the existing Willamette River bridges and provide greater opportunities for circulation and accessibility in the Salem Urban Area.
- Northern Alignment—The Tryon Avenue NE/Pine Street NE alignment should be shown as a shaded area that connects that portion of North Salem to a range of possible locations in West Salem. This future river crossing does not have a definitive time frame or cost estimate. The specific alignment will need to be determined through a future Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. This northern alignment should be considered the leading priority for any future river crossing in the Salem Urban Area. Statewide Goal 3 exceptions and Willamette Greenway issues will need to be addressed through further study and findings.
- Southern Alignment—After the completion of a future northern river crossing, the next most feasible rivercrossing alignment would connect the New Viewcrest Street S Extension to an area around the intersection of Doaks Ferry Road NW and Highway 22. This alignment option should be shown as a general shaded area until future study determines a more specific alignment. This future river crossing does not have a definitive time frame or cost estimate. The completion of a southern alignment should be considered second in priority to the completion



of a northern alignment rivercrossing. State, SKATS, and City staff do not recommend incorporation of this alignment into an EIS process at this time, due to the anticipated cost to mitigate physical terrain and environmental concerns. Statewide Goal 3 exceptions and Willamette Greenway issues will need to be addressed through further study and findings.

- **Alternative Modes Improvements**—In order for the existing Marion Street and Center Street bridges to function at an acceptable level of service, even with additional future rivercrossing(s), an aggressive strategy to improve the percentage of trips using alternative travel modes will be required. These improvements will require increased transit service, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling, walking, telecommuting, flexible work schedules, and other transportation demand management measures. Changes in the amount of employment in West Salem may affect the directionality of future traffic flows.

12th Street SE

It is recommended that within the time horizon of the long-range strategy, 12th Street SE (between Cannon Street SE and Commercial Street SE) be improved to a five-lane, Major Arterial cross section having four travel lanes, a landscaped median, sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. The intersection at 12th Street SE and Commercial Street SE will need to be reconfigured for better traffic flow, possibly including a grade-separated design that would provide a direct connection between Sunnyside Road SE and 12th Street SE. Any grade-separated design would have to provide accommodations for bicycle and pedestrian travel.

Center Street NE

It may become necessary within the time horizon of the long-range strategy, if not sooner, to create a total of three travel lanes between Illinois Avenue NE and 13th Street NE. This can be accomplished through removal of on-street parking and the planting strips. A small amount of additional widening may be needed at some locations. The resulting design would have two eastbound travel lanes and one westbound lane.

Wallace Road NW (State Highway 221)

It is recommended that the segment of Wallace Road NW between Orchard Heights Road NW and Edgewater Street NW bridgehead area be improved with the installation of a landscaped median, plus additional turn lanes at intersections as needed. A more efficient configuration of the existing bridgehead area will be needed. A series of local circulation streets will be required on both sides of Wallace Road NW in order to preserve property access.

Doaks Ferry Road NW

As part of the long-range strategy for Highway 22, a new grade-separated interchange will be necessary at Doaks Ferry Road NW and Highway 22. As West Salem further develops, it may become necessary to improve Doaks Ferry Road NW to a five-lane cross section south of Orchard Heights Road NW.

Arterial and Collector Street Standard Upgrades

Within the 45-year horizon of the long-range strategy, it is important that all arterial and collector streets within the Salem Urban Area be brought up to full urban standards. This will ensure a completed system of bicycle lanes and sidewalks.



Transit System

In order for the City of Salem to avoid major traffic congestion and subsequent road widenings, the percentage of work trips using travel modes other than the single-occupant automobile must increase significantly beyond the 25 percent goal identified in the original 20-year Plan. Three major improvements are envisioned for the transit system in this long-range strategy:

- Establishment of a timed-transfer bus route system that increases crosstown travel opportunities. This system will be configured either in a traditional “grid” transit route design; via several smaller transit hubs, located at major employment and activity centers; or a hybrid of both designs. The downtown transit center will still remain the focus of the transit system, using a modified “pulse” system to facilitate transfers.
- Expansion of transit service hours to cover all seven days of the week with increased frequencies especially during peak hours. Express bus service from park-and-ride lots will be expanded as ridership and the number of park-and-ride lots increase.
- The establishment of intercity commuter service to outlying communities such as Woodburn, Stayton, Sublimity, Turner, Aumsville, Silverton, Dallas, Monmouth, and Independence. This can be accomplished through either an expansion of the Salem Area Mass Transit District boundary, creation of another public entity, or through private vanpools and shuttles. Park-and-ride lots will be located along major highways and arterials to intercept other incoming commuters at the fringes of the city, where they can transfer to express bus service.

Other Transportation System Improvements

It is envisioned that other improvements will need to occur to the transportation system such as:

- All signalized street intersections will be connected to the City’s traffic control center where their status and timing will be coordinated by time of day. Major travel corridors will be monitored in real-time, so that signals can be adjusted and the system managed around incidents and congestion delays.
- Other technological aids, such as in-vehicle navigational computers, variable message signing, and incident detection systems, will be incorporated into the transportation system as they are developed.
- The availability of high speed passenger rail service between Salem and other Willamette Valley cities.
- The potential use of McNary Field as a “reliever” airport for Portland International Airport for either passenger and/or air freight services. This possibility is more feasible with the establishment of a high speed rail link between Salem and Portland.
- The completion of the city sidewalk system, not only on arterial and collector streets, but on most local streets as well. This would provide safe and convenient connections to transit service and reduce the need to drive the automobile for short trips.