



October 1, 2016

City of Salem Mayor and City Council
Marion County Commission
Polk County Commission
City of Keizer Mayor and City Council

RE: Salem River Crossing Proposal Case File: CA 16-04

Honorable assembled officials:

I represent a basin-wide organization called Willamette Riverkeeper. Our organization works to protect and restore the Willamette River's water quality and habitat. We have several hundred members throughout the Willamette Valley, with many in Salem, Keizer and the surrounding area. We have some significant issues with the proposed bridge and amendments to local zoning around Goal 15.

We have the following concerns.

Impacts to State Parks and Willamette River Recreation

The Draft EIS and all public involvement have overlooked the fact that McLane Island is an Oregon State Parks Department property. It is part of the Willamette Water Trail (see <http://willamettewatertrail.org/map/mclane-island/>), a federal designation made by the Secretary of the Interior. The draft EIS has no recognition of either the ownership of the island by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department or evaluation of the impacts of the proposed bridge on the use of the island as a part of the Willamette Water Trail.

Willamette Riverkeeper is the key partner with the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department in regard to the Water Trail, and no OPRD staff or our staff have heard of this proposed change until recently. In fact, it seems OPRD has not been notified of this significant proposal by the City of Salem.

Having a bridge over this island is very problematic for public use, and for wildlife. Further, bridge piers placed in the side channel around the island would also pose unnecessary risk to

river users. In our view, it seems some critical communication has not occurred with the State of Oregon, or with local river organizations.

The Salem Willamette Greenway Program

Salem is the Capitol City of Oregon and the second largest city in the state, yet the City has paid little attention to the Willamette Greenway. It is somewhat ironic given that Governor Bob Straub, who first formally proposed the Willamette Greenway Program, had strong ties to Salem in multiple ways. The Greenway Program was adopted in 1979 and has not been updated or reviewed in the many years since it was adopted, and this represents a significant lack of connection by the City of Salem to this important Land Use Goal.

There has been little effort on the part of the City to seek the public sentiment about the Willamette waterfront other than the development of Riverfront Park and acquisition of the Boise Cascade property to add to Minto-Brown Island Park. The proposed action by the City will greatly impact the Willamette Greenway in the City limits, and has not been evaluated enough in regard to the decision before the Commission.

I urge you to postpone a decision until further analysis has been done that adequately reflects the requirements of the Willamette Greenway, the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Departments property at McLean Island, and further engages the public in a meaningful way.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Wilton", is written over a light gray rectangular background.

Riverkeeper & Executive Director
Willamette Riverkeeper