



October 8, 2016

Polk County Planning Commission
Polk County Board of Commissioners
Salem City Council
Marion County Board of Commissioners
Keizer City Council
Keizer Planning Commission

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

I am speaking on behalf of Friends of Polk County, a citizen organization working with our Community Development Department to protect and enhance our quality of life by building livable urban and rural communities, protecting family farms and forests and conserving important natural areas.

We are submitting this testimony to reflect the fact that many residents of Polk County are NOT in favor of the current proposal to build a 3rd bridge in Salem. The complicated and questionable process of expanding Salem's UGB is not justified for the following reason:

- Oregon Land Use Planning Goal 14 requires "Prior to expanding an UGB local governments shall demonstrate that needs cannot reasonably be accommodated on land already inside the UGB. We submit that upgrading the existing bridges to state of the art earthquake standards and adding lanes to accommodate additional traffic would be a wiser and far less expensive solution to several problems:
 - o 1) Less ecological impact to waterfront and river channel,
 - o 2) Shorter distance across river,
 - o 3) Less disruptive and destructive of existing neighborhoods, residences and businesses,
 - o 4) Existing bridges are inside the UGB so no complex process to expand UGB,
 - o 5) Less financial burden on citizens

We are quite certain that when the cost of the bridge becomes clear to Polk County residents along with the possible means to pay for it resistance may well be overwhelming. Population projections supporting a new bridge must be accurate and current. If they are anything less the

whole project will be questionable. If we don't need a 3rd bridge, there is no need to expand the UGB to accommodate transportation needs.

There are at least two smarter and cheaper ways to ease congestion on the current bridge: (1) Encourage more use of flex hours for people with jobs in Salem. and (2) Improve public transportation between rural Polk County and Salem and between West Salem and Salem. The League of Women Voters published a major review of Public Transit in Polk and Marion Counties in 2012. Several relevant findings are reported. Substantial ridership fluctuations on Cherrits are associated with variations in level of service. Levels of service are dependent on revenue available. Return of Saturday service is a high priority. Dependency on transit will increase as the "baby-boom" population ages. Finally, costs of providing additional transit service and/or infrastructure are less than major road construction projects like additional bridges or freeway widening.

The character, charm and integrity of Polk County lie in its rural qualities, its natural resource based economy and its several small towns. Sending more long distance traffic out Highway 22 will enhance none of these positive qualities but will contribute to Lancaster-like sprawl spreading ever westward. If there is money to be had it would be wiser to invest in revitalizing the downtowns of Dallas, Independence and Monmouth so folks will be less tempted to drive across the bridge to Salem – therefore relieving congestion and the need for a new bridge and the need for an expansion of the UGB.

Thank you,

Tremaine Arkley
President, Friends of Polk County