

City of Salem Public Works Department
Case File No. : CA 16-04

My written testimony including attachments for
Hearing dated October 12, 2016
From Loreen Wells
2390 Liberty St. NE
Salem

Subject: Proposed Amendments to the Salem Keizer Urban Growth Boundary, Salem Transportation System Plan and a Proposed Exception to Statewide Planning Goal 15 (Willamette River Greenway) to Allow for the Proposed Location of a New Bridge Across the Willamette River

To the Members of Salem Planning Commission, Salem Public Works Dept and whoever else is relevant to this discussion:

Well, here we are again. I am not able to come to this meeting for health reasons but this letter with attachments is my testimony. This is for the October 12 hearing on your proposed changes to the UGB for your fantasy bridge. Give it up already. This bridge has been on Salem's official agenda for 10 years. Or 40 years, if you listen to Mayor-elect Bennett. If this bridge were urgent it would already be built. Traffic flow has been flat or decreasing for years. Easier and much less expensive fixes to our existing bridges are available. Those were never even discussed.

There is wide spread public opposition to this bridge for those who know about it. It appears there have been concerted efforts on the part of this body to keep the public from knowing anything about this bridge or its planning. Now after a year and a half of underground planning, there is a big rush to get this bridge put into the City's Transportation Plan. It's not an emergency. If we really need this bridge and there is the means to get it done, the incoming Council could get it done just as well as our current Council. The incoming Councilors campaigned against the bridge for the most part, and won most of the new seats by large margins. I think they are the reason for rushing this plan through. This is an effort to cement this bridge in place, fix it in stone so it can't be changed, regardless of what anyone else thinks or wants or how the world changes. I'd like to know who really wants it and why.

The arguments of congestion don't hold up. We do not cross the bridges every day as some do for jobs, but we have never ever seen what we would consider real congestion. Slowdowns at times, added 5 minutes or even 30 minutes to commute, is not congestion. Try Portland traffic in or out of rush hour. That's congestion. Younger people are opting not to get driver's licenses or cars. Fewer driver's licenses and fewer cars means less traffic, not more. This bridge does nothing whatsoever for those younger people who do not drive.

There still is no viable funding plan. There is no money. There is no hope of money in the foreseeable future. A viable payment plan is supposed to be part of the EIS. not "we'll figure out what to do when we feel like it". Who in their right mind buys a house without first figuring out how to pay for that house or any house? Maybe if for you money is irrelevant? Money is most certainly relevant for giant public projects. BEFORE you start. Isn't it standrd to look for a house that fits one's budget? Putting the bridge in Salem's Transportation Plan will not get it done any faster. All that would do is to install "the cloud" over many properties. "The cloud" diminishes what an owner can do with his or her property. It also devalues all such property. Obvious and urgent public needs arising after this plan is installed will be more difficult to accomplish. This is true whether or not the bridge is ever built One gentleman said

something like his kids will be able to add what they feel needs to be done after 30 years. Who knows what we will be like in 30 years? In the meantime, we would be committed to this fantasy bridge.

The "Salem Alternative" plan Council voted in was supposed to be a smaller, local style bridge. It no longer looks remotely like the shape and form Council was led to believe it would be. When it surfaced after the vote a few "minor" changes were made to the drawings and construction choices. It is no longer the bridge of that Council vote. Every time we see this bridge again, it's different than it was the last time we saw it. Every time we see a new map the map gets worse for those who live in the trajectory of the bridge. That trajectory changes every new map we see. More houses and businesses lost, more home and business owners hurt every new map.

On the east side of the river, Highland is a compact neighborhood of smaller houses. It is walkable. No other Salem neighborhoods I know fits that description. Might be some, but if there are, I don't know about them. Many of our houses here do not have garages. As a result we know our neighbors. We see our neighbors regularly. There is a regular lament from the City on the lack of affordable housing. Highland has affordable housing. It would cost considerably less to keep the housing that's already here, or to upgrade, compared to new construction. Affordable housing already here would be gone with this plan. Not coming back either if cemented over. The City has been tearing down much of the affordable housing that used to exist here. Tearing down more parts of Highland would add to that housing deficit.

I-205 was once planned to come through here on approximately the same trajectory as you propose for this bridge. Houses were torn down, foundations, walkways and plantings left behind when that project was blocked by local citizens. Those remnants were here when I moved to Highland in 1976. Now a number of those remnants have been built on again, the area has been recovering. Newer houses going up. New businesses going in. Older houses are being nicely redone and are inhabited by families with younger children. This plan would destroy that process, that housing and businesses. Doesn't anybody there care, or is it just money that talks?

The last map I saw would split this part of Highland. Much of it would be gone. What's left would be impossible to navigate on foot. It would be difficult for the Highland residents who do have cars to access this proposed construction. Residents here who walk to Fred Meyer for groceries will not be able to do that without courting suicide. Salem Parkway already makes that trip extremely difficult and dangerous. Housing will be devalued, as would other property. Businesses that serve this area would be gone. Do you want to turn this established neighborhood into an instant slum? Your actions point that direction.

I am thankful that Councilors Tom Anderson and Diana Dickey recognize all this. They voted no on supporting this bridge for many of the same reasons I do not support it. If you have any conscience aside from your wallet you will vote no on this railroad job. Rushing projects as big as this one would make for big mistakes.

Aside from these considerations, your request to change the Urban Growth Boundary appears to violate the spirit and the letter of the Greenway Act. I attach relevant portions from the Salem Greenway Plan. That plan was to restore and enhance the river and its uses for the public. That plan requires habitat protection and care for wildlife and native vegetation as well as humans. The Greenway was designed to make the river more accessible for recreation, reduce noise, offer restful views, and support creatures native to our environment. Corvallis and Portland have done exactly that for the public. Major high speed traffic overhead here would certainly detract from those aims. How could the public even get to

the river? Not to mention the heron rookery would be demolished. Pilings will have to be driven into the river bottom. Many of them, according to your latest drawings. The river flow will be disturbed. Flooding could increase, river banks eroded, river bottom damaged. The bridge would come down in a major earthquake. What happens when the gravel company closes and leaves deep holes in the river bottom. Does your plan take that into account? No. The pretty little bridge shown to get votes for building the "Salem Alternative" is a fantasy. Not going to happen. Instead you want to give us an ugly, giant, freeway bridge we do not need. That shouldn't happen either. At one point I saw Mr. Fernandez promoting islands of sorts on the bridge surface with amenities for walkers. Who in their right mind would walk across his and your proffered bridge?

Have some consideration for your fellow humans and the planet, why don't you?

Sincerely,
Loreen Wells
2390 Liberty St. NE

Attachments include:

1. Relevant portions of the Salem Greenway plan
2. Notes from my previous in person testimony

Attachment #1

City of Salem Public Works Department
Case File No. : CA 16-04
Testimony for hearing October 12, 2016

From Loreen Wells
Liberty and Hickory
Salem, Oregon

Subject: Proposed Amendments to the Salem Keizer Urban Growth Boundary, Salem Transportation System Plan and a Proposed Exception to Statewide Planning Goal. 15 (Willamette River Greenway) to Allow for the Proposed Location of a New Bridge Across the Willamette River

To the Members of Salem Planning Commission, Salem Public Works Dept and whoever else is concerned the following is additional written testimony I present for consideration at the Oct 12, 2016 hearing. Not much here that has been taken into consideration while developing the current bridge plan:

Excerpts from the **WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY PLAN**
CITY OF SALEM
September 10, 1979

In 1979 Oregon enacted the Willamette River Greenway. Per the Willamette River Greenway Plan, City of Salem, September 10, 1979 the plan's stated goal is "to protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic, and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River."

"The Salem Greenway Plan is a design plan and administrative review procedure that must be adopted and approved by DOT and LCDC. Any land owner located within the Greenway boundaries to change or intensify the use of his property must, before taking any action, apply for a Conditional Use Permit. The Salem Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on the permit.

The Greenway Plan is to be implemented through Chapter 120 of Salem Revised Statutes. The following segments are considered elements of the Salem Greenway Plan

POLICIES to achieve the above stated goal above are listed as:

1. Reglaltions (sic) shall be adopted to control the use of land and the intensity of uses within the Willamette River Greenway Boundary
2. Riparian vegetation and wild life within the Greenway Boundary shall be conserved. Conservation shall include protecting and managing riverbanks, sloughs, wildlife, and vegetation.
3. Scenic easements shall be used where practical to preserve and enhance the character of the river within the Greenway Boundary.
4. Where private property is adjacent to public use areas, measures shall be taken to minimize disturbance to the private property.
5. Development and redevelopment within the Greenway Boundary should include provision for public access to and along the river.
6. Existing parks within the Greenway Boundary shall be preserved and maintained. Additional sites for

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recreation and scenic views and access to the Willamette River should be acquired.

7. New development and changes of land uses which are compatible with the Greenway concept as defined in the State Land Use Goal may be permitted along the Willamette River.

8. The review of proposed land use changes shall include the establishment of an appropriate set back from the Willamette River.

9. Aggregate extraction may be permitted within the river channel and on lands adjacent, when determined to be compatible with the purpose of the Greenway. Proposed extraction activities shall be designed to minimize the adverse effects of water quality, fish and wildlife, vegetation, bank stabilization, stream flow, visual quality, noise and potential land use.

Attachment #2

City of Salem Public Works Department
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Subject: Proposed Amendments to the Salem Keizer Urban Growth Boundary, Salem Transportation System Plan and a Proposed Exception to Statewide Planning Goal. 15 (Willamette River Greenway) to Allow for the Proposed Location of a New Bridge Across the Willamette River

To the Members of Salem Planning Commission, Salem Public Works Dept and whoever else is relevant to this discussion, these are notes from my August 8, 2016, testimony in person to Council. I wish to add these notes to my testimony for the October 12, 2016, hearing.

My name is Loreen Wells

I have lived on the corner of Liberty and Hickory for 40 years. Our historic house is over 100 years old. We are in the bulls eye of this proposed bridge. We have been jerked around for 10 years now by ODOT and the City of Salem. We feel like we have targets painted on our foreheads. The shape of that target has morphed over the years, but like a zombie it keeps coming back.

I have been to every ODOT public information meeting on this subject since 2006. Engineers there told me the plan would take 5 feet off both street sides of our property. We would have a freeway right outside our front door as well as our north side windows. Our house would be unlivable. What is barely two lanes on Hickory would become freeway off ramp. Getting to Freddy's is already difficult for foot traffic. The proposed bridge would cut us off almost completely.

We went to Council meetings where all options other than the most extreme 4D were dismissed out of hand. A new option called the Salem Alternative was introduced and voted in by Council. It was supposed to be more a local bridge. The next time we saw that Alternative, it bore no resemblance to the one Council voted on. Instead it became essentially 4D by another name. Considerable public input about the bridge was completely ignored, or forbidden altogether.

Last year there was no public information about the bridge. Now there is a big rush to get it done. Why? Is there an emergency? I can't see how.

New neighbors with small children have been moving in around us, putting a lot of money, labor and energy into improving their houses. New businesses built here. Having the prospect of this bridge would permanently damage all of us. Councilor Dickey, three years ago you spoke of the damage that would result from installing "the cloud" over us. This is that cloud. Do you really want to do that to your constituents?

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Why do you keep doing this to us? There is no money now or in the foreseeable future. There has never been any remotely viable funding plan. This bridge is unlikely to ever be built. Putting it into the permanent plan is outrageous. Where is your humanity?

Submitted again here for the hearing October 12, 2016
Loreen Wells