

Testimony of Jim Scheppke
1840 E. Nob Hill, Salem
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My name is Jim Scheppke and I reside in Ward 2 in Salem.

I ask that tonight mark the end of the Salem River Crossing Project.

I ask that because the Salem River Crossing is a failed project. You can compare it to another failed project, the Columbia River Crossing project, that we are all painfully aware of. It failed because in the end there was no viable plan to pay for it. And that fact was recognized by state elected officials, and they did the responsible thing and stopped throwing good money after bad. You need to do the same.

In its ten year history the Salem River Crossing Project has actually failed three times. The first failure happened on August 15, 2012, when the Salem River Crossing Task Force, having met for six years failed to agree on a bridge option to forward to the Project Oversight Team. I was there. There was no agreement. But instead the *plurality* decision of Alternative 4D went forward, which was a mistake.

And of course 4D was a horrific recommendation, which the Salem City Council realized and tried to fix with the so-called Salem Alternative.

And this is when the project failed a second time, because the Salem Alternative was officially "accepted" by the Project Oversight Team. But not really. They proceeded to modify it beyond recognition.

The Salem Alternative, was supposed to be a "signature bridge" that minimized piers in the water. But the Preferred Alternative that is the subject of this hearing is not a signature bridge, and it will have 10 piers occupying nearly 1,300 sq. ft of riverbed.

Public works staff told the City Council in May, 2013, that "no existing residential properties are removed" by the Salem Alternative. But the Preferred Alternative will require the removal of over 100 homes and businesses.

The Salem Alternative moved the Rosemont exit to Eola. But the Preferred Alternative simply removes the Rosemont exit with no replacement.

So that was the second failure of this process, and when the Salem City Council learned that the Salem Alternative was the victim of a bait and switch, that should have been the end.

But it wasn't the end. Which led to the 3rd failure. That being the failure to come up with a viable funding plan for this project. The funding plan with bridge tolls and new taxes and fees that was developed at the end of 2014 by the Project Oversight Team is a total fantasy.

This funding plan that is required to be part of the Final Environmental Impact Statement has zero credibility and if the Federal Highway Administration is doing their job, they will reject it.

Again, let's not forget that it was the lack of a viable funding plan that brought an end to the Columbia River Crossing Project. Our state elected officials did not pretend otherwise. They pulled the plug.

And after three failures, it is time for you to be responsible and pull the plug on the Salem River Crossing.