



Comments received by email and postal mail

DATE: August 17, 2007

2007

49. Comment – 8/17/2007 9:55 AM

I want to follow up on my comment that none of the alternatives currently on the table meet the purpose and need to which the task force agreed. That came as somewhat of a realization during the discussions of the "improvements" that would be needed at the various intersections at either end of the alternative crossings. These "improvements" will have a devastating effect on pedestrian mobility and a negative effect on bicyclist mobility. There is ample literature available discussing the characteristics of areas that accommodate pedestrian traffic--and none of it describes 6-8 lane intersections as beneficial. The City of Salem itself has acknowledged the impacts of these types of intersections by the recent projects to construct curb bulbs at many intersections, particularly in the capitol mall area. (I would be happy to put together a little walking route/assignment for anybody who thinks that the street configurations on the table are beneficial for pedestrians.)

With the alternatives that we have, we are no longer having a discussion about how to meet the purpose and need, but rather we are discussing what elements of the purpose and need are going to be compromised and to what extent one mode is going to be sacrificed for the benefit of another.

I appreciate that the study team is trying to be neutral with respect to the development and presentation of the alternatives. However, given the many decades during which transportation bureaucrats have confused motor vehicle travel planning with transportation planning, clearly the perspective and language used during discussions of projects prevents that neutrality. I have previously chided folks for characterizing the alternatives as solutions to congestion, which they clearly are not. Certainly, the term "improvement" is another value laden characterization of the impacts of expansion of an intersection that focuses solely on the impact on motor vehicles. So, here's a challenge/proposal: During the next task force meeting, anytime a member of the study team is tempted to use the term "improvement" to describe construction of an expanded intersection, they instead use "construct a barrier to pedestrians and bicyclists".

Response – 8/21/2007 7:33 AM

Thank you for this thoughtful follow-up to your comment at the meeting last week. I appreciate you taking the time to send it. You make some excellent points, and your input throughout the process has been valuable.

I think most of us agree that "improvements" is a value-word and we should be more careful when we use it. As you imply, one person's "improvement" is not necessarily the next person's. "Components" or "changes" are more value-neutral words. (I have a whole list I keep of value-words that are used in this business - to remind me not to use them!) So thank you for pointing this out.

With respect to meeting Purpose and Need - The background data in the Purpose and Need statement regarding pedestrian and bicyclist mobility and safety is tied to the facilities for crossing the river -i.e., improving bike and ped facilities on the existing bridges, which are currently deficient. So the main thrust of this need is to provide such facilities (to current standards) as part of any built project (e.g., new bridge and related street reconstruction or existing bridge and related street projects). Our design standards for this project include ped and bike facilities on all concepts and therefore will meet the purpose and need by providing such facilities.

The issue of the quality of the pedestrian and bicyclist experience provided by any given alternative is also important and will be taken into account in the evaluation process (Goal 1, Objectives 6 and 7). This will help illustrate differences among the alternatives being considered.

You make excellent points as to the potential for hazardous conditions or less than ideal quality at the connections (e.g., at big intersections, or those with ramps). The design team will work to make the intersections work as well and as safely and pleasantly as possible for all travel modes.

While I realize this response may not exactly answer all your concerns, I hope it places them in the context that the design team is thinking about for the project as a whole. Thanks again.

48. Comment – 8/15/2007 3:06 PM

I would prefer a bridge that gets Hwy 22 connected, and a bypass that would allow west Salem access to I-5 easily. I know the new bridge whatever it is, is going to further add to congestion to West Salem corridor, but, if made with a connection to Hwy 22 say from Mission South, and one at Tyron N, you probably have a better plan. You might even be able to use a 3 lane bridge and converting the middle lanes for commuter times by using 2 lanes at a time, and using it for emergency vehicles during other times of day? Just an idea? Something like the express lanes in Seattle. It might be our best solution?

Response – 10/31/2007 8:58 AM

Thank you for your comment on the Salem River Crossing project and I apologize that it has taken so long to respond to you.

Our preliminary traffic analysis has validated the results of the work completed by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) in 2002. That study resulted in the

selection of the Tryon/Pine corridor as a locally preferred alternative for a future river crossing. Our current analysis indicates that a new crossing somewhere between the existing bridges north to Tryon Avenue will result in the largest reduction in traffic on the existing bridges. Significantly more traffic will be removed from the existing bridges when the direct connection to OR 22 is included. This is consistent with the Purpose and Need statement that has been developed to guide the development of project alternatives - the basic elements of that statement are to improve mobility on the existing bridges while alleviating congestion on the surrounding local streets. The data supporting these conclusions is contained in the Study Area Refinement memo which is available on the project website.

Thank you for your comment. I encourage you to attend one of the open houses, scheduled for Thursday November 8 (5-8 pm) at Highland School and Wednesday November 14 (5-8 pm) at Roth's West Salem to see the latest information on the project and provide comments. Also, beginning November 1, you will be able to take a survey on the project web site to express your comments and preferences on the project alternatives. All public comments received will be considered by the stakeholder Task Force and Oversight Team in forming their recommendations on the alternatives to be advanced into the environmental impact statement.

48. Comment – 8/15/2007 6:06 AM

Thank you for the detailed reply, Julie. I agree that a moratorium would not work for a lot of reasons (one simply being the legality of using a moratorium as I suggested) but one could argue that there are public health and safety issues. When the bridge is blocked (accident, jumper, weather, etc) first responders may not be able to move from one side to another ... its happened before and will happen again. Immediate fixes include the morning and afternoon (say from 6am-9am and 3:30pm to 6pm) parking on the east side (along Center and Marion from the bridge head to Church St) being turned into no-parking (towaway) so traffic can move expeditiously through that jam. A very easy fix that is used in many cities around the county. Again, thanks for the reply and for this opportunity to comment further.

Response – Not Requested

47. Comment – 8/6/2007 10:23 PM

To Whom It May Concern: I reside at 1825 Water Street NE, in a house that would be bulldozed if the proposed Academy/River Street bridge route were chosen as the preferred river crossing option. Obviously, I would prefer that another route be chosen for that reason alone. One key factor, however, that may not be known by the project team is that my house, as well as several of the neighboring houses, are original 1930s houses that are now the last remaining old houses in Salem that were originally on the banks of the river. To destroy these houses is to destroy the last vestige of this part of Salem's history. In addition, it is my understanding that the long term goal of the City is to create a vibrant, high-density residential neighborhood along the banks of the River near the downtown. Our little neighborhood is a perfect complement to that long term goal. In combination with the Willamette Landings apartment complex, and the nearby schools and parks, this area can

serve as a perfect northern cornerstone to that vision of Salem's future riverfront. I fully support the addition of a new bridge, but it is difficult to understand why it can't be placed somewhere between Pine Street and Tryon, where there are vast tracts of empty, vacant commercial properties where the owners would likely love to sell off their land to a bridge project, with no loss of homes or the destruction of neighborhoods. Unfortunately, I did not hear of your plans to potentially go south of Pine Street until after the open houses were already finished, but I do hope that you consider my comments seriously and most importantly, walk the streets of this neighborhood to get a sense of some of the history that still remains on Water Street.

Response – Not Requested

46. Comment – 8/3/2007 1:20 PM

As a West Salem resident I can't agree more with those on the east side (of the river crossing) not being interested in the recipient of the bridge access dropping into their back yards. With that said, the only immediate solution to the traffic situation as it exists, today, is to enact a moratorium on all new residential construction in West Salem until this matter is resolved. It's absolutely unacceptable that we continue to feed the traffic problem without first having a solution in-hand. Of course, what I propose is essentially a no-win situation but it's all we can do right now.

Response – 8/14/2007 12:23 PM

Thank you for your interest in the Salem River Crossing Project. You suggested that the City of Salem should enact a moratorium on new residential construction in west Salem. State law governs when and how local governments can impose a moratorium on construction or land development. These laws can be found in Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 197.505 to 197.530. These laws limit the reasons a city can impose a moratorium, and limit the length of time a moratorium may be in place. Moratoria are primarily intended to address immediate threats to public health and safety. The maximum time limit a moratorium may be imposed is 6 months - with a maximum of 3 6-month extensions allowed. It is not likely that a moratorium could be justified based on either current or future predicted traffic volumes in the West Salem area. In addition, a moratorium requires a corrective plan - i.e., a plan to correct the problem creating the moratorium. After the corrective plan is adopted, the moratorium must be lifted after the 6-month period and any extensions have passed, even if the corrective plan has not yet been completed.

The environmental process we are currently working on is an important step to correct the traffic problems in West Salem, but we have not yet identified what the appropriate solution is as required by federal and state regulations. This will happen over the course of this project.

Part of the Salem River Crossing Project will be to develop a funding strategy. Once a preferred alternative is adopted, we will need to move forward with implementing the funding strategy to be able to start final design, right-of-way purchases, and construction.

Please let me know if I can provide further information on the Salem River Crossing Project.

45. Comment – 8/2/2007 2:55 PM

To whom it may concern - I am concerned with some of the latest comments I am reading in the paper (S.J.). The primary concern has and allows should be, adequately addressing traffic on the west side. Right now the two bridges are the only way residents and commerce from the west of town and the mid coast can efficiently access the east side or retail districts, hospitals, distribution points, etc. etc. in the Salem mid- Willamette Valley area. In my opinion a free flowing and efficient connection between Hwy 22 and the Parkway on the east side is critical. As I see it now, whether the point of landing on the east is Tryon or Pine is subject to more information and discussion. I still believe, we need those identified improvements for the two existing bridges, ie. additional lanes going south off the Center St. bridge and a off ramp the merges w/o stopping going north on the Parkway. I also, like a on ramp going off (over the Marion Park) Commercial St. headed west onto the Marion St. bridge, which I believe has been recommended by some. I think the traffic study of the movement associated with this recommendation and prompting the installation of one of the first photo-radar locations makes it a prime candidate for approval. Your consideration is appreciated.

Response – 10/29/2007 9:52 AM

Thank you for your input, both this email and your email from August 2, 2007. This input was and will be shared with the community Task Force and Oversight Team. Your concerns about addressing traffic mobility across the Willamette River are reflected in the Project's Purpose and Need Statement. All solutions will need to respond to the Purpose and Need by improving mobility while alleviating congestion on the connecting highway and arterial street systems. We are currently seeking public input on which of the 13 alternatives should be eliminated, and which merit additional evaluation in the Environmental Impact Statement document. We will be posting an on-line survey starting November 1 where you can share your specific input. We also have open houses scheduled for November 8 (at Highland Elementary School) and November 14 (at Roth's in West Salem) - both last from 5 to 8 PM, with presentations at 5:30 and again at 7 PM.

With regard to improvements to the existing bridges, some of the alternatives identify improvements needed on the existing bridges, including additional travel lanes. Also, all alternatives include the improvements that are already funded as a result of the Bridgehead Engineering Study. This includes doing some widening on the Center Street bridge off-ramp to southbound Front Street and a installation of a traffic signal for the Center Street bridge off-ramp to northbound Front Street. This signal will allow the traffic heading north to the Parkway to clear off of the ramp more efficiently. A free-flow ramp is not possible without moving the piers that support the Marion Street bridge.

Once again, thank you for your input and we hope to see you at one of our open houses. - Julie

44. Comment – 8/1/2007 6:46 PM

I would greatly appreciate a direct invitation to contribute to the commentary around any bridges that come to Front Street, since that's right outside my front yard. I don't read the Statesman Journal. The concept of putting thousands or tens of thousands of cars from West Salem onto Front Street or through Tyron is simply appalling to me. I moved out of West Salem many years ago because there were too many cars. I chose Front Street partly because the house we live in is some of the most desirable real estate in Salem and partly because I want to be able to walk to work each day. Seeing people insist on commuting to work or wherever they want to go one person to car is frankly disgusting. I sure don't want those people ruining my neighborhood. The bridge alternative through Tyron appears to be intentionally designed do as much damage as possible to the property values of all of the houses along the Willamette River from Pine Street past Tyron. This is, again, some of the most desirable property in Salem. Replacing these houses with bridge abutments and swarming hordes of cars can hardly be considered a favor to the community. I ask you to think about where traffic will be in 25 years. West Salem has no more room to grow southwards, it can only grow north and west. That means more cars will be saturating Wallace road every year. It won't matter how many bridges you build south of Keizer, Wallace road will be a nightmare anyway. It seems like it would be a very wise thing to do to put the bridge in north Keizer or even farther north. Dumping all of the traffic from West Salem into downtown Salem is doing nothing at all for the community. It would be much wiser to charge a surtax to all commuter cars parking in the downtown area on a daily basis and encourage, even insist on public transportation from West Salem to the downtown area. If that fails, and it shouldn't, widen the existing bridges, add a second deck to each bridge, replace them or build light rail between downtown and West Salem. Have people leave their cars at home. Create regular bus service, free even, to take them to the light rail head. Why is the only solution to build more bridges? The problem with the downtown area is too many cars as it is. Make it pedestrian friendly if you really want livability and community. The last thing you'll get by catering to cars is community. You should know that. You're supposed to be the planners. By destroying my chosen neighborhood and my home's value, you will be unfairly shifting the cost to me and my neighbors by destroying our property values and making our neighborhood unlivable. This is for the selfish people in West Salem who can't possibly conceive of using public transportation or alternative means of getting work or shopping in the downtown area. For those going elsewhere, like Portland, routing them through the downtown area does nothing to contribute to the local economy, the livability of Salem or a sense of community. Route those people completely around the downtown area. Send them north along Wallace road and north of Keizer.

Response – Not requested

43. Comment – 7/18/2007 1:32 PM

After looking over the river crossing site, I come to the realization that nothing is going to happen until after I turn 50 years old. Why in the world does it take so long to figure this out? The city of Salem continues to allow new construction on the west side of the river, but does nothing to accommodate the increase in traffic. This makes no sense at all. Why do we pay taxes? To pay for four years of studies? Com out to west Salem any morning or

evening and take a look at the traffic. Do you not remember the huge traffic snarl when that fellow decided to jump off the bridge? My family was stuck in Salem for five hours if not more. I for one urge you to get with it and do something about the situation now, not in 2010. Maybe it's time the people in West Salem become their own town. Cut through the crap and let's get this done. Oh and my vote for a new bridge is one that connects to pine street or the parkway, NOT another bridge that forces me to drive through downtown. Thank you for your time.

Response – 8/6/2007 3:51 PM

Thank you for your comment on the Salem River Crossing Project, and I apologize for the delay in responding. As you are aware, we are currently working to develop the federally mandated environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate various alternatives for providing additional traffic carrying capacity across the Willamette River.

Completion of the EIS and the selection of the preferred project are projected in spring 2009 (the schedule for the EIS process can be found on the project web site - www.salemrivercrossing.org). I understand your frustration with the amount of time involved with this process. While a new bridge has been studied in this area for decades, this is the farthest the region has ever gotten in the required decision making process.

Once the EIS is finished and funding for the selected alternative is secured, there are additional steps that must be completed prior to beginning construction such as project design and acquisition of right-of-way - depending on the selected project and the complexity of the design, these processes could take an additional 2-3 years. Due to all of these factors, it will be 7-10 years before a new bridge could be completed. ODOT, the City of Salem, and Polk and Marion Counties have placed a high priority on the completion of the EIS process and advancing this project toward construction.

In evaluating alternatives we will look to see what phasing or related improvements might be possible to help alleviate traffic congestion sooner. For example, the region has allocated federal funds towards improving the intersection at Wallace and Glen Creek. In addition, new development in west Salem, as well as elsewhere in the City, is required to make transportation improvements associated with their impacts and to pay Transportation Systems Development Charges.

I encourage you to stay informed on this project and continue to provide input.

42. Comment – 7/18/2007 8:44 AM

Please consider adding a light rail system to Salem. We need better commuter options.

Response – Not requested

41. Comment – 7/17/2007 3:59 PM

Where the document says please sign in here it brings you to another document not a place where you can sign in. That is confusing. I would like to know what environmental impacts this project will bring in each proposed phase and the impact on the community and what the project impact will be on the community in the future.

Response – 8/6/2007 2:56 PM

Thank you for your comment on the Salem River Crossing Project and I apologize for the delay in responding. You asked about how and when environmental and community impacts will be evaluated during this project. The Project Evaluation Framework details six goals and objectives that will be used to compare the benefits and impacts of the different alternatives. Goal 2 focuses on impacts to the natural and cultural environments. Goal 3 focuses on impacts to the community and neighborhoods. Goal 6 addresses the aesthetics of different design solutions. All of the alternatives will be evaluated against these criteria, starting this fall. The first round of evaluation will help narrow down the range of alternatives to a smaller number of alternatives. Then next spring and summer, a more detailed evaluation will occur on the remaining alternatives. This more detailed evaluation will also look at environmental and community impacts. The document describing the evaluation framework can be found at the project web site, under materials, project library, or at the following link:

<http://www.salemrivercrossing.org/ProjectLibrary/EvaluationFrameworkMemo.pdf>

You also commented on a confusing picture on our web site about signing in. This poster was actually the poster that we used at the open houses where we were asking people to sign in. It is confusing to show it on the web site, so we are replacing that image with a different image from the open house.

Thanks again for your interest in this project. I will share your input with our technical team and with our community Task Force and Oversight Team.

40. Comment – 7/15/2007 8:10 PM

At the open house I was told the following: that 60+% of the peak traffic was commuters from West Salem to downtown work locations, and that about 30% of the remaining traffic was commuting longer distances in Polk county. If most of the peak traffic is commuters to and from downtown Salem to West Salem/Polk County it is unclear to me why a bridge further north of the existing bridges would be used by these commuters. If the basis for the design is to alleviate the morning and evening commutes, higher capacity mass transit options would, on the surface, appear less expensive and invasive than new bridges. As such, during the evaluation of alternatives, I'd request that multiple mass transit options be presented and reviewed. Those options should include rubber tired trolley, expanded bus service, light rail options using the existing railroad span, and others we haven't envisioned. Finally, with the replacement of the existing bridges likely occurring within the same timeframe as this new proposed bridge, other options should be considered.

Response – 8/6/2007 2:06 PM

Thank you for your input on the Salem River Crossing Project. I apologize for the delay in responding. We will share your input with both the technical staff team and the community Task Force and Oversight Teams.

With regard to the distribution of traffic, in the PM Peak Hour, our travel model shows that in 2031 about 60% of the trips on the Marion Street bridge (westbound) will be going to destinations in west Salem; about 37% will be bound for locations further west on Highway 22, and about 3% will be traveling to locations further north on Wallace Road (e.g. McMinnville).

We are developing an alternative that looks at what impact increased transit service would have on people's travel choices. This increased service would be express service with frequent trips (about every 6 minutes). For the purposes of the travel model, it does not matter if it is on a bus or on rail - so the express service could be using a rail line on the Union Street RR bridge, or it could be express bus on a dedicated transit lane on the existing bridges. We are also incorporating into this scenario increased charges - such as increased fees for parking downtown - to see how this effects the travel choices that people make.

We are running our traffic model to see if this package of improvement will meet the project's purpose and need of reducing congestion on the existing bridge. If it meets the purpose and need, then it will be advanced into the range of alternatives for further evaluation. If it does not meet the purpose and need, portions of this strategy could be appended to a build option to reduce the amount of infrastructure needed (e.g. may reduce the number of lanes needed on a new bridge).

With regard to the replacement of the current bridges, we do not anticipate that this will occur within the timeframe of the current transportation system plan (which goes through 2031).

I encourage you to continue to stay involved in this project as we move into evaluating the different alternatives against a wide range of goals and objectives this fall.

39. Comment – 7/2/2007 6:41 PM

After looking at the 6 proposed sites for the bridge it brought about a number of things you are not looking at that kind of baffles me. If you were to build a bridge south of the existing bridges that would take 22 straight over the river missing west Salem all together it would speed the traffic out of town and make going through Salem less painful. I guess an example would be either take mission straight across or trade but if you use trade it defeats the purpose of taking traffic away from downtown. If this was implemented it would come into hwy 22 west in Polk county at the end of the 50 mile per hour zone after Capital Manor. I know this is problematic for longer bridge and land access but in the long run the existing bridge would serve West Salem just fine if the through traffic would be separate. Just my opinion but the ideas of the bridges north of Center and Marion streets seems to have the same old congestion as we have now. Once it hits Wallace in West Salem we have the same back up we have now. Thanks for reading. Hope you consider this Idea.

Response – 7/9/2007 8:56 AM

Our preliminary traffic analysis has validated the results of the work completed by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) in 2002. That study resulted in the selection of the Tryon/Pine corridor as a locally preferred alternative for a future river crossing.

Our current analysis indicates that a new crossing somewhere between the existing bridges north to Tryon Avenue will result in the largest reduction in traffic on the existing bridges. This is consistent with the Purpose and Need statement that has been developed to guide the development of concepts - the basic elements of that statement are to improve mobility on the existing bridges while alleviating congestion on the surrounding local streets. The data supporting these conclusions is contained in the Study Area Refinement memo which is available on the project website at:

http://www.salemrivercrossing.org/ProjectLibrary/StudyAreaRefinementMemo_102006.pdf

This memo illustrates that a southern alignment, while it would carry some trips, would not do as much to relieve traffic congestion as the alignments to the north of the existing bridges. In addition, there are obstacles to an alignment that uses Mission Street as an extension of Highway 22. A key obstacle is that there are deed restrictions on Bush Park that do not allow any park land to be used to widen Mission Street.

Thank you for your comments. I encourage you to stay involved in the process through the project website (www.salemrivercrossing.org). Please feel free to call or e-mail if you have further questions or need additional information.

38. Comment – 7/2/2007 12:08 AM

Obviously, those of us who live in North Salem or Keizer would favor one of the two northern options. It would make our crossing the river much quicker and easier. It also, however, seems that it would make less congestion in the West Salem area if the bridge location was one of the two more northern sites--three of the sites seem awfully close to the existing bridges (and West Salem by the bridges can hardly hold the traffic it currently has). The idea of connecting directly to 22 sounds good, but not sure how that can be accomplished without sending traffic through an already congested area by the current bridges. I do not favor doing anything that will cause fields at Wallace Marine Park to be lost--with the number of fields located there, large tournaments can be scheduled which bring outside teams into the area and money into Salem's economy (and local teams need the field space, also).

Response – Not Requested

37. Comment – 6/22/2007 8:04 am

The dates on the webpage for Newsletter 2 seem to indicate June 2006, when I assume they should be 2007.

Response – Not Requested

36. Comment – 6/30/2007 4:30 PM

I was very shocked and surprised to find that widening of S commercial between Fabry and Fairway was not included in the handout I received at Roth's for the 2031 Committed and Included Projects. This piece of Commercial is a hodge-podge of 2, 3, 4, and 5 lanes with no sidewalk and only a narrow 5 foot shoulder. It has a posted speed of 45 with new business' building along this stretch. Also, many new homes and apartments are being built on Wiltsey, Madras, and Robbins Lane. All of which will increase the already heavy pedestrian traffic. Another strange thing about this area is that from Battle Creek to Fairway there is a 22 foot wide paved shoulder with posted No Parking. This piece has no public access the entire length and will never have any. Is there a reason this piece of Commercial has been slighted?

Response – 7/2/2007 3:04 PM

Commercial Street SE is designated in the Salem Transportation System Plan as a major arterial - with an ultimate cross section of 5 lanes (2 travel lanes each direction with center turn pockets). The need to complete this widening is included in the Salem Transportation System Plan and in the Regional Transportation System Plan. In the Regional Plan it is categorized as "Illustrative" and thus did not show up on the list that you picked up at the open house last week.

The City will require that Commercial Street be widened to the ultimate width as development occurs. This may result in some sections being wider than others until the area is fully developed. The development currently underway on the southwest corner of Commercial and Wiltsey will be widening Commercial Street to accommodate a left turn lane into their development and into Guentners driveway and 2 southbound travel lanes. The righthand travel lane will become a drop lane at Wiltsey until future development can extend this further south. Future development and redevelopment would be required to continue this improvement.

The area with the wide shoulder was exacted from the adjacent development, but at that time there wasn't a need to stripe for two lanes since there was only one lane north of Fairway. In the future, we plan to restripe the section of Commercial for two northbound lanes approaching Fairway. This will likely happen when the two northbound travel lanes extend further than they do today.

Please let me know if you have additional questions on future plans for Commercial Street or other streets in the City.

35. Comment – 6/28/2007 7:53 AM

I was unable to attend either meeting this week, but I am concerned that most of the current crossing concepts seem to end at Wallace Road. What happens to the traffic then? Wallace Road already is congested and becoming more dangerous with all the apartments planned for the area. It makes no sense to simply move the congestion from downtown Salem to Wallace Road and then west toward the coast, joining Hwy 22 from Edgewater. The west side of Wallace Road from Brush College Rd south to Glen Creek Road already is heavily built-up with residential areas, including my own. In its haste to add subdivisions and more homes on the tax rolls, Salem seems to have provided an excellent example of poor planning to meet long-range transportation needs. Once upon a time I thought the long-range plan was to cross the river and make a connection to Brush College Road, then south on Doaks Ferry Road to connect with the coast highway around the Eola Inn area. A high school on Doaks Ferry and subdivisions sprouting like the once-famed cherry blossoms have obviously put an end to that possibility. Has any thought been given to a complete Salem by-pass of the river by putting the bridge at the Wheatland Ferry location with a tie then toward Amity and then Highway 99W and Highway 18 even though I know it, too, has its problems? I've not seen any studies about how much of the bridge problem might be alleviated if I-5 and Highway 22 traffic from the east that is simply driving through Salem could be eliminated. Would a complete by-pass reduce traffic significantly or very little? Your materials don't seem to answer that question. I gather from the paper's drawing that a south crossing at Kuebler or even Mission with a direct connection to Hwy 22 is no longer even being considered. Those seem like viable possibilities to me and I'm curious about why those options have apparently disappeared from the process even though I thought at least Polk County officials at one time thought the Kuebler crossing was the best option.

Response – 7/2/2007 11:53 AM

Thank you for your recent comment on the Salem River Crossing Project. The following information is provided in response to your comments/concerns:

- At this point, all of the concepts for a new bridge crossing include connections to OR 22 and the future Marine Drive, as well as Wallace Road. Our preliminary traffic analysis indicates that Wallace Road will operate at an acceptable level with these additional connections. Marine Drive has become an important piece of the circulation system which acts to divert some north-south traffic from Wallace Road.
- Our preliminary traffic analysis has also validated the results of the work completed by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) in 2002. That study resulted in the selection of the Tryon/Pine corridor as a locally preferred alternative for a future river crossing. Our current analysis indicates that a new crossing somewhere between the existing bridges north to Tryon Avenue will result in the largest reduction in traffic on the existing bridges. Significantly more traffic will be removed from the existing bridges when the direct connection to OR 22 is included. This is consistent with the Purpose and Need statement that has been developed to guide the development of concepts - the basic elements of that statement are to improve mobility on the existing bridges while alleviating congestion on the surrounding local streets.

Traffic passing through Salem on OR 22 is a very small percentage of daily and peak period traffic. Only about 3% of the traffic crossing the Marion Street Bridge in the afternoon peak period is coming from points east of Salem on OR 22. This is also consistent with the findings of the MWVCOG study. Given the time and cost involved in siting and constructing new traffic carrying capacity across the river, we are all working to find the best location that will provide the greatest congestion relief. The region may want to consider additional crossings in the future - our goal here is to get the next one done.

Thank you again for your interest in this project. I encourage you to stay informed and involved in the process through the project website - www.salemrivercrossing.org - new and updated information will be posted there along with meeting dates for our stakeholder Task Force and the Oversight Team. Please feel free to call or e-mail if you need additional information.

34. Comment – 6/27/2007 7:48 PM

I have a few questions about some of the proposed routes. 1. Is there a current leading concept? 2. I imagine that traffic on Hope and in turn Kenard St NW will increase if the Hope connection is made. What are the plans to alleviate additional traffic on Kenard for people taking short cuts to get to Orchard Heights (avoiding Wallace)? 3. It is difficult to see on the online maps where the proposed Wallace and Orchard Heights connection will be made. My home is near the intersection of Kenard and Orchard Heights. Specifically, how will this impact my home at 1508 Kenard St NW? How close would the connector be? 4. If Orchard Heights is widened, which side of the street will lose property? I'm trying to determine how close Orchard Heights will come to my home. I hadn't realized how much this project could impact traffic and noise around my home. Your help in making me understand all this would be greatly appreciated.

Response – 7/2/2007 2:42 PM

Thank you for your comments and questions on the Salem River Crossing project. At this point in our process, the intent is to develop as many concepts as we can that will address the identified problem. As we go through the screening process, many of these concepts will be filtered out using the evaluation framework that has been previously developed. A memo describing the evaluation framework is located on the project website. Through this screening process, we hope to get to 2-4 alternatives that will be advanced and evaluated in the environmental impact statement. That is a very long-winded way of saying there is not a leading concept at this point. The process will define the alternatives that best meet the purpose and need.

The concept layout work we have done is very preliminary and is based totally on the need to carry traffic. We have not done any detailed design work that would allow me to answer the specific questions regarding impacts to your property. As you can see from the evaluation framework, emphasis will be placed on the impacts to the community (not just carrying traffic) as we screen the alternatives. As we develop the concepts further, we will be able to give you more specific information on property impacts.

Please continue to follow the project through the website (www.salemrivercrossing.org) where additional information on the various concepts will be provided as it is developed. Thank you for interest and please feel free to call or e-mail if you have any further questions or need additional information.

33. Comment – 6/25/2007 1:18 PM

I saw the bridge choices in the paper. Why aren't there any bridges farther north than Tryon Avenue? If we could divert traffic that is heading to Portland to the north crossing, it would eliminate a lot of traffic through downtown Salem. South bridges would then be first choice for those crossing to Salem for work when coming from Polk County and points farther west, and they would have a lot less traffic. Wallace Road in West Salem is a nightmare in the morning and at night. If you diverted traffic to a north bridge such as at Lockhaven or Chemawa Road, it would be a straight shot to I-5 without as much cross town traffic. Also, you would have traffic moving both directions on Wallace Road thus freeing up some of the current bridge traffic. Another bad point about bridges at Market, Hood and Academy are that they go through Wallace Marine park which needs to be kept as it is; a place of refuge uninterrupted by traffic and bridges. Bridges at Pine, Academy and Hood don't solve the problem of what you do with the traffic on the east side of the river to ease congestion. Traffic would be dumped onto Liberty N to access the parkway to get to I-5. A bridge at Market Street is too close to the existing bridges and would not relieve traffic congestion on the west side of the river because of where that traffic would join Wallace Road., nor would it do much to relieve congestion on the east side by downtown. The best, ideal bridge would be to the north which would help ease congestion in downtown Salem, be a more direct route for I-5 travelers when using a street already with an I-5 connection such as Lockhaven, and also handle traffic from McMinnville and Yamhill County. I would be glad to discuss this with anyone who might be interested in contacting me.

Response – 7/2/2007 2:56 PM

Our preliminary traffic analysis has validated the results of the work completed by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) in 2002. That study resulted in the selection of the Tryon/Pine corridor as a locally preferred alternative for a future river crossing. Our current analysis indicates that a new crossing somewhere between the existing bridges north to Tryon Avenue will result in the largest reduction in traffic on the existing bridges. Significantly more traffic will be removed from the existing bridges when the direct connection to OR 22 is included. This is consistent with the Purpose and Need statement that has been developed to guide the development of concepts - the basic elements of that statement are to improve mobility on the existing bridges while alleviating congestion on the surrounding local streets. The data supporting these conclusions is contained in the Study Area Refinement memo which is available on the project website.

Thank you for your comments. I encourage you to stay involved in the process through the project website (www.salemrivercrossing.org). Please feel free to call or e-mail if you have further questions or need additional information.

32. Comment – 6/22/2007 8:04 am

The dates on the webpage for Newsletter 2 seem to indicate June 2006, when I assume they should be 2007.

Response – Not requested

31. Comment – 6/18/2007 4:45 pm

Comment on Goal 5 cost effective solution. I suggest adding an objective for evaluating equity of funding: users should pay for new bridge. It is the commuter traffic from Polk County that generates the need for a new bridge, so a large share of the funding should come from the commuters that cause the need. This could be in the form of tolls or property tax levies on new development in Polk County.

Response – Not requested

30. Comment – 6/02/07 2:24 pm

As A home owner in west Salem I would like to express our needs for a new bridge. Number one is the safety of our communities. The current Marion street bridge is the only close way across the bridge. If one small thing happens on the bridge it holds up traffic for miles in every direction. This could prove to be disatourouse in an emergency. Ambulances are unable to reach someone in need. If we had a fire and needed help from other departments, they couldn't get to the fire. Anyone who uses the bridge on a regular basis will tell you that even when there isn't a problem on the bridge the traffic is bumper to bumper in the morning and in the afternoon. Do we want our community to feel like we are in L.A.? If you haven't noticed, west Salem is in the middle of a housing boom. Hundreds of homes are being built and apartments to. With an average of two cars per family that will only make a new, bridge more important than ever. The longer we have to wait the more expensive it will be to build.

Response – 6/04/2007 12:33 pm

Thank you for your input on the Salem River Crossing project. As you are probably aware, the City of Salem and ODOT are currently undertaking an Environmental Impact Statement process to address the problem with congestion on the existing bridges. This process is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Our aim is to end with a federally recognized decision on either a new bridge or some other solution to address the existing and future congestion. The current phase of this project is to reach agreement on the range of alternatives. We have two open houses scheduled in late June (see detail info below). I would encourage you to attend one of the open houses - or check back on the web site between June 26th and July 10th to give your input on the range of alternatives.

Open Houses

*Tuesday, June 26th, 5 to 8PM - First Baptist Church (395 Marion Street NE) - parking lot is accessible from the corner of Liberty and Union Streets.

*Wednesday, June 27th, 5 to 8PM - Roth's Hospitality Center, Oregon Room (425 Glen Creek Road NW) - parking lot is accessible from Glen Creek Road.

The same information will be presented on both days - so come to whichever date and location works best for you. Presentations will also be held on both nights at 5:30 and 7PM.

Once again, thank you for your interest.

29. Comment - 1/24/07 12:06 pm

Thanks for your response.

While I understand there's been no definitive decision on the exact bridge location, I thought the recommendation was within the square defined on the maps exhibited at the City meeting presentations, which includes Pine/Tryon. I guess what is frustrating is that IF the bridge is located at the end of Pine the necessity of purchasing that property later could end up costing taxpayers more in the end. Once word gets out that the bridge will be at a specific location, property owners may be tempted to escalate the price to the county/state (similar to the property owner out at Keizer Station). If the property was purchased now at a fair price, and the decision was later made to put the bridge at a different location, the property could be resold later, presumably at a profit (which could go towards building the bridge). What's more concerning is that the prospective property owner of the Stars location may not realize that a bridge may be planned there (I doubt the sellers will disclose that information) - then they're left holding a property they don't want to develop to its full potential. Conversely, it is possible that someone may purchase the property gambling that it will be chosen for the bridge site and inflate the price to the county/state for the bridge.

Response – 1/25/07 8:57 am

I understand your frustration. But as a government entity, we have to rely on adopted plans that go through a required process. We do our best to communicate with property owners about future transportation projects, but they have to make decisions on what is best for them on their land. I will share your concerns with the Task Force and Oversight Team working on this project.

28. Comment - 1/23/07 8:39 am

Please substitute Cathy Clark for Richard Walsh on the oversight team listing on the web page representing Keizer. Thanks.

Response – 1/26/07 10:04 am

Thank you for the notice on the Keizer representative on the River Crossing Oversight Team. We will make the requested changes.

27. Comment - 1/17/07 2:43 pm

Your site probably answered the questions, but I did not find them: (a) Why not use the two studies that were done and the plan that (to my understanding) had been agreed upon? (b)

With the congestion, etc. that has existed for several years, why is action on building an additional bridge taken so long to begin serious planning ... West Salem appears to have a very low priority with the City of Salem. I have resided in West Salem for 38+ years and have at times felt that we represent an unwanted step-child for the city officials.

Response – Not requested

26. Comment - 1/14/07 5:00 pm

Thanks for responding to my letter, I can understand that Federal money is hard to come by due to the expenses incurred by our beloved president's blunders. I suppose I can only say, "do your best in the unfavorable circumstances" and continue to grit my teeth with the rest of those using the inadequate bridges for another ten years!
Sincerely, a disgruntled

Response – Not requested

25. Comment - 1/14/07 10:56 am

All the discussion seems to center on where the bridge will cross the river. Equally important is how a third bridge will connect on the west side. If it simply connects to the existing Wallace Road, it will not solve the problem -- it will add to an existing one. The bridge should not be discussed without considering the impact on the west side. What about the planned Marine Drive? Where does it fit in this picture. How would this traffic reach Hwy. 22 and the coast, bypassing Wallace Road, Edgewater, etc. At one time the plan was to connect to Doak's Ferry Road and join the coast highway near the Eola Inn. That seems to have been eliminated as a possibility with the West Salem High School and multiple subdivisions approved by the city. A third bridge is not the answer without a plan for handling traffic once it crosses the bridge going west and east.

Response – Not requested

24. Comment - 1/14/07 10:12 am

Although we need at least 3 new bridges, please don't waste our chance of our 1 shot on a bridge that goes nowhere. Lockhaven would tie directly into the freeway and into Lincoln. This would take the pressure off the north bound traffic and off the current bridges. The next bridge after that should be Mission into Rosemont interchange. This would be very expensive, if there wasn't an elevated bi-pass to the freeway to take the pressure off Mission, this would be pointless. The last choice would be Pine St. This will take pressure off for the local traffic, but will not tie into any freeways. Polk County will not stop issuing building permits, and the bridges will never keep up with people moving into that area. Think hard before we lose a great chance to do the Lockhaven bridge.

Response – 1/19/07 7:37 am

Thank you for your comment and I apologize for taking so long to respond. The preliminary analysis we have done to date confirms the results of a study conducted by the Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) completed in 2002. Both have found that a new river crossing located somewhere between the existing Marion and Center Street bridges and the area of Tryon Street (at the south end of Salem Parkway) does the most to relieve traffic on the existing bridges. A crossing in the area of Tryon or Pine Street (which was identified as the locally preferred alternative in the SKATS study) could be connected easily to Salem Parkway which is a direct connection to the freeway. We have also found that most traffic on the Marion and Center Street bridges has a local orientation - that is one or both trips ends are in the Salem-Keizer metropolitan area. A crossing which primarily addresses regional connections, therefore, would not do a very good job of solving the major traffic problem which is local trips.

I appreciate your comment and encourage you to stay informed and involved in the process through the project website and/or attending meetings of the Task Force and Oversight Team (meeting dates/times/locations will be posted on the website). We will also be holding additional public open houses in the spring or summer.

23. Comment - 1/7/07 7:14 pm

I prefer to remain anonymous. I have had actual conversations with actual people who have real control over federal funding for transportation projects. I was assured that it will be a cold day in a very warm place before Salem gets federal funding for a bridge over the Willamette before Portland receives such funding if money does become available. It was also emphasized that any money for Willamette bridge work is unlikely for anyone in the foreseeable future because the federal budget is expected to be under heavy pressure due to anticipated budgetary burdens as the result of costs associated with increased demands on social security, the costs of military adventures, and the overall competitive environment in the world economy. These are the political realities. The future, of course, is hard to predict and those who do so often receive a lesson in humility. Nevertheless, I think it is safe to say that a bridge project which depends on federal funding is extremely unlikely within 12 or 13 years, very unlikely within 20 years, and possible within 30 years. Another potential funding source is the State of Oregon. This may be problematic if one considers the proposed location of the bridge. If it does not act as an expeditor of commuter traffic and freight by connecting Bend to the coast by providing unimpeded traffic flow through Salem, then it would contradict the goals of the Oregon Highway Plan. The proposed crossing points north of the existing bridge would necessitate travel through downtown and a clear route would be impossible without severe disruptions and extreme costs. What to do. I think that, at the least, people who are contemplating a move to West Salem should get an honest evaluation about what the future seems to be. I also think that SDC's for developers should reflect the inescapable future costs of transportation which will in large part be a result of the increased population in West Salem. People who build in West Salem will primarily be skilled, white collar, or professional people. They will most likely need to cross the river often. I propose 2 approaches to alleviate this anticipated demand. The first is a rather unique proposition. How about a Wal-Mart. Now that competition is basically outlawed and the sources of goods and services are becoming more and more centralized,

small business growth is unlikely. A megastore west of the river would reduce the number of trips across the bridge significantly. The second proposal is to use the existing railroad bridge, with improvements, to provide mass transit from a parking area west of the river to a suitable location in the heart of downtown. I am not certain that this is feasible but from the testimony that I have heard, I think it is worth looking into.

Response – 1/25/07 8:44 am

Thank you for your comment and I apologize for my delay in responding. I'll address your concern about funding and your two suggestions below.

Funding: You are correct that both federal and state funding are likely to be very competitive. We will be developing a financial strategy as part of the Salem River Crossing project. This strategy will need to identify how we propose to fund the preferred alternative, most likely with a combination of local, state, and federal funds. As part of this, we will be exploring public/private partnerships and other alternative funding mechanisms.

"Wal-Mart": As we develop alternatives, we will consider how changes in land use could affect the transportation need. While we won't get to any specific use such as a Wal-Mart, we will look at assumptions about the amount of commercial land in west Salem. This analysis will build on the West Salem Neighborhood Plan.

Railroad Bridge: The possibility of converting the Railroad bridge to use by cars or transit was analyzed in 1998. While it would be possible, the railroad bridge does not integrate well with the existing street system. Taking this into consideration, the City Council made the decision that using this bridge for a pedestrian and bicycle transportation was the higher priority.

Once again, thank you for your comment and we will share your suggestions with the Task Force working on this project. I encourage you to continue to provide input throughout this process.

22. Comment - 1/7/07 6:07 pm

I'm wondering if the State will be proactive in purchasing the former Stars location at the end of Pine? Purchase now may be cheaper than later if a new owner purchases. In addition, if the Pine location is now used for the new bridge, then the State could resell the property.

Response – 1/24/07 10:33 am

Thank you for your comment and I apologize for my delay in responding.

The purpose of the federal environmental process we are involved in is to ensure that decision makers use a transparent and fair process to reach a decision about how best to address a significant transportation need. We are not at the point of knowing whether a new bridge will be supported or where it would be located. While we are building on the previous planning process we cannot assume that the Pine/Tryon corridor will be the preferred alternative out of this process. In addition, the corridor from the previous planning process was broad; it was not refined enough to use as a basis for purchasing right-of-way. The

conclusion of the Salem River Crossing project and adoption of a preferred alternative into the local and regional transportation plans will give us a basis for future acquisition of right-of-way. I encourage you to stay involved in this process as we work towards this decision.

21. Comment - 1/2/07 8:55 pm

We moved to West Salem in 1977 and had our home built in the Eola area of West Salem in 1978. During this time growth in West Salem has been constant; however, never more than in the last 2-3 years. The bridge is always crowded with people swerving around changing lanes when we cross over into Salem downtown. If we take Wallace Road when we return it is a mess. It is very frustrating and dangerous if there is an accident or incident blocking our one bridge over the Willamette. There has been nothing but talk of the need for another bridge ever since we moved here but so far, no other route has been definitely decided on so action can take place. I am beginning to wonder if there will be another bridge in my lifetime. I feel that road planning studies and committee meetings should surely be over by now. Land & construction prices continue to rise. Surely anyone who comes over the bridge must realize we need another route to West Salem. Please do anything you can to remove hurdles from the Tryon/Pine Street proposed new bridge route before constant gridlock sets in and it is too late.

Response – Not requested

2006

20. Comment - 12/30/06 9:23 pm

This bridge project has been moving too slow for too many years. West Salem is burgeoning with new growth and a new bridge across the Willamette is necessary ASAP.

Response – Not requested

19. Comment - 12/30/06 12:34 pm

As residents of N.W. Salem for the past 17 years my wife and I have become increasingly alarmed at the enormous growth of the area and the resultant traffic snarls due to convergence at the bridges. This problem will only get worse and demands a solution that only another bridge can solve. Any incident, however minor, results in intolerable back-ups throughout downtown and N.W. Salem. Police don't help when they close all lanes when one or two could be kept open. (Witness the threatened suicide a few months ago) The subject has been studied to death for many years and the cost will only increase so WE NEED THIS BRIDGE, any other proposal is only a band-aid. LET'S DO IT!!!

Response – 1/9/07 7:33 am

Thank you for your comment and I apologize for the delay in responding to you. We are embarking on a process to develop the federally mandated environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate various alternatives for providing additional traffic carrying capacity across the Willamette River. Completion of the EIS and the selection of the preferred project

is projected in Spring 2009 (the schedule for the EIS process can be found on the project web site - www.salemrivercrossing.org). As part of this process, we will also be evaluating options for funding the project. The good news in this is that we have never advanced this far in the development of plans, designs, and funding alternatives for a new Willamette River Crossing. ODOT, the City of Salem, and Polk and Marion Counties have placed a high priority on the completion of the EIS process and advancing this project toward construction. However, once the EIS is finished and funding for the selected alternative is secured, there are additional steps that must be completed prior to beginning construction such as project design and acquisition of right-of-way - depending on the selected project and the complexity of the design, these processes could take an additional 2-3 years. Due to all of these factors, the simple response to your concern is that it will be 7-10 years before a new bridge could be completed. We recognize that the time it takes to complete these processes is frustrating, but be assured that all of the partners (City, County, State) in this process are committed to delivering the final product as expeditiously as possible.

I encourage you to stay informed on this project and continue to provide input.

18. Comment - 12/30/06 9:00 am

It is not clear to me why there is even a question that another bridge should be built and built immediately. With more and more homes being built the existing problems with traffic will only increase. The ferry is not even part of the solution. Money spent on a larger ferry did not even make a tiny difference in lessening the traffic problems and the ferry doesn't run if the water level is too high or if it is too low. It is not dependable. Perhaps it could be considered a tourist attraction, at best. Because of such traffic problems connected with the bridge, the ability for people to get needed emergency services. We need another bridge and we need it now! Spend no more money on studies. Decades of study should suffice!

Response – Not requested

17. Comment - 12/30/06 8:58 am

I concur with the statement of Craig Hanneman that doing nothing is no longer an option for expanding the crossing of the Willamette River in Salem. Certainly several studies have been completed in the past two or three decades. It is time to make a decision and move forward. Merely check the development on both sides of the river as an indication of the high need for wider/safe bridges to connect Marion and Polk County. The Salem bridges not only provide access for commuters but also for the residents from other parts of the valley who wish to visit the Oregon coast or the ever popular casino. Personally, I have lived in West Salem since 1988 and recognize the increased volume of traffic on Hwy 22 moving into Salem at most hours of the day. Merging traffic and cars needing to move lanes to get to their destination create another safety problem with the present bridge design. In this year, it seems mute as to a bridge off Pine Street or a bridge with a connection to the south. Both areas have grown significantly to justify additional services. I submit this comment, along with hundreds of other citizens, advocating for a decision regarding the "bridge issue".

Response – Not requested

16. Comment - 12/29/06 7:18 pm

Where and when is the bridge being built? Have any of these decision making persons ever been in the Wallace Rd. traffic trying to get to work. I leave at 6:45 and have to wait to get onto Wallace Rd because there are so many cars driving in and out of town. If I leave at 7am, the traffic is backed up all the way to the Assembly of God church and takes me 40 minutes to get to my job which is on the corner of Meyers and Commercial. I really think there needs to be a light at Michigan City Lane, those poor school aged kids are having a horrible time getting through to the other side of the street to catch their bus. What's it going to take, someone getting killed before anything is done:::

Response – 1/9/07 7:22 am

Thank you for your comment and I apologize for the delay in responding to you. We are embarking on a process to develop the federally mandated environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate various alternatives for providing additional traffic carrying capacity across the Willamette River. Completion of the EIS and the selection of the preferred project is projected in Spring 2009 (the schedule for the EIS process can be found on the project web site - www.salemrivercrossing.org). As part of this process, we will also be evaluating options for funding the project. Once the EIS is finished and funding for the selected alternative is secured, there are additional steps that must be completed prior to beginning construction such as project design and acquisition of right-of-way - depending on the selected project and the complexity of the design, these processes could take an additional 2-3 years. Due to all of these factors, the simple response to your concern is that it will be 7-10 years before a new bridge could be completed. ODOT, the City of Salem, and Polk and Marion Counties have placed a high priority on the completion of the EIS process and advancing this project toward construction.

I encourage you to stay informed on this project and continue to provide input.

I have also forwarded your comment about a traffic signal at Wallace Road and Michigan City Lane to the staff at ODOT and the City of Salem who are responsible for evaluating the need for new traffic signals.

15. Comment - 12/20/06 1:09 pm

Concern on Traffic Modeling As I stated at the scoping meeting I am concerned that data collected along existing roadways can only conclude that an additional span is required in the near downtown area of Salem, as the existing roads are set up to funnel vehicles to the existing spans. Thus, it is my comment that the study, as presented, is skewed to producing a result to support a predetermined bridge location. I'd like to recommend that during the EIS that traffic patterns be evaluated on multiple scales, local, city-wide, and regional in an effort to evaluate where one or more crossing(s) may be included for evaluation rather than the limited location of options north of the near downtown core. By placing an additional crossing in the downtown area, roads in the nearby area will quickly become loaded to capacity and the solution short lived. Clear understanding of which vehicles are transgressing the area, such those transitioning between I-84 and 22, would help myself and

others understand why loading of downtown surface streets is viewed as a solution by ODOT's technical staff. The idea that more tractor trailer combinations could be placed downtown streets and arteries is not a solution that well recognizes the value statement geared toward citizen safety. As for commuters between West Salem and the downtown core, I'd recommend that the EIS include alternatives to single person vehicles and include the notion of expanded mass transit, construction of a dedicated automated "trolley" on the old railroad bridge with associated autocentric structures (parking for example), and other novel methods of moving people around. Getting citizens out of there cars and using other modes of transportation are longer term solutions, whereas construction of additional paved surfaces isn't. The EIS should include city and county level projections of population growth to include future development strains. As development continues west of the river and south of Salem, commuters from those areas would be constrained to using near downtown bridges which may tend to maximize their miles driven, if other more efficient options are not presented. Creating solutions the ultimately lead to greater volumes of fuel consumption are counterproductive and contrary to goals to limit the emission of green house gases. I'll close for now recommending that the strategic focus of the oversight team and project team include statements that include a conservation element embodied by the notion that fewer vehicles on the roads is the long term goal, reduced overall consumption of hydrocarbon fuels is critical, and that thinking outside the usual solution box is required, otherwise a context sensitive solution will not be developed.

Response – Not requested

14. Comment - 12/20/06 11:50 am

Regarding building a new bridge across the Willamette in Salem, please don't do it. It's time we stop building roads and bridges and promote alternatives. Take a look at central Salzburg: one auto bridge and a pedestrian/bicycle bridge every two blocks or so. A new auto bridge will promote more growth in West Salem and encourage continued and even more auto use. The money needed to build one auto bridge could build multiple foot/bicycle bridges, perhaps some with a superlight-rail crossing. In this age of global warming, disappearing farmland, wars over oil, and congestion, we need to act responsibly and look to the future. If an auto bridge is tragically built, think creatively and with incentives NOT to drive as we always have: carpools only, cars of certain weights only, a high toll, or something! Thank you.

Response – Not requested

13. Comment - 12/7/06 9:46 pm

So sorry I couldn't attend Wednesday's meeting on the 3rd bridge, and Thursday's was cancelled due to poor attendance. However, [name] would like to add his proverbial Two Cents.

1. Suggested Name: Peace Crossing. Reason: Salem is derived from the Biblical term for Peace. This is the season to celebrate the Prince of Peace. Modern touch: Have placques to

honor all Nobel Peace Prize winners with years and their actual feats. That would certainly give us a unique urban personality. And most definitely this exudes multiculturalism.

2. Emergency Route: Let's not overlook the downside of having only the Marion St. Bridge as our solo channel to West Salem in the interim. Any fire truck or ambulance totally depends on the existing bridge. As a practical stop-gap, I urge the RR Bridge be equipped with an emergency middle lane for such vehicles when (1) rush hour ensues; or (2) a standoff sequel, truck accident etc. closes down our lifeline or substantially delays ER access.

If such planning saves even ONE LIFE, it is well worth the price. When we have a hearing, count on my voice for urgent action.

Response – By phone, 12/8/06

12. Comment - 12/6/06 9:19 am

I am opposed to building a third bridge over the Willamette in Salem, for several reasons. First, it makes no sense in terms of the trajectory we are on with regard to gas prices. There is no doubt that the price of gas will continue to go up, gradually inducing people to seek other modes of transport than the car. The money which would go towards a new bridge would be better spent making alternate modes of transportation more accessible to more people--buses and bicycles particularly. Second, global warming is an undeniable fact. Encouraging the increased use of cars, or the continued wasteful use, is contrary to our ultimate goal of cutting greenhouse emissions. Building a third bridge encourages the current pattern of use of the individual automobile. Third is cost. The money which will be spent on all phases of a third bridge would be much better spent on improving our other modes of travel. Clearly the citizenry of the area are beginning to wake up to the fact that our only mass transportation system needs financial support. I refer to the recent ballot measure supporting our bus system, which failed by a much smaller margin than one would have expected even a few years ago. Right now, unfortunately few people (relatively speaking) use our bus system, but many non-users recognize that they may want the option of using buses in the near future. Our aging population, combined with the increasing cost of gasoline, will gradually push up bus ridership. That's where our transportation dollars should be going. One of the most absurd parts of the whole third bridge discussion is that the perceived need is based on "rush hour" slowdowns of traffic movement. However, if you assess the actual number of minutes a day when traffic is slowed, and the tiny percentage of total time that is, it makes no sense to throw so much money at the third bridge solution. So what if people have to slow down for twenty minutes of their day? Thank you for considering my comments.

Response – 12/14/06 3:00 pm

Thank you for your input and I apologize for the delay in responding to you. I will share your concerns with the Task Force working on this project. We will be developing and evaluating alternatives this spring and summer. We expect that alternative modes will be an element in one or more alternatives. Cost is also a factor that will be used to evaluate alternatives.

Thanks again for sharing your ideas on the Salem River Crossing Project.

11. Comment - 12/5/06 3:43 pm

I have lived at this address for the past 16 years. During this period traffic on the bridges and in West Salem has tripled or quad-tripled. What will it be in the next 5 years? Some thing needs to be done "yesterday". If there is a wreck or incident on either bridge, West Salem becomes isolated. If I needed emergency medical assistance via an ambulance to the hospital, I might die waiting to cross the bridge. If a major fire occurred in West Salem, we would get no assistance from The Salem Fire Department located on the east side of the river. West Salem is no longer that bedroom community on the west side of the river. West Salem has just started its growth; the population will probably double within the next 8 to 10 years. Help! Help!

Response – 12/14/06 9:33 am

Thank you for your question and I apologize for the delay in responding to you. We are embarking on a process to develop the federally mandated environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate various alternatives for providing additional traffic carrying capacity across the Willamette River. Completion of the EIS and the selection of the preferred project are projected in spring 2009 (the schedule for the EIS process can be found on the project web site - www.salemrivercrossing.org). As part of this process, we will also be evaluating options for funding the project. Once the EIS is finished and funding for the selected alternative is secured, there are additional steps that must be completed prior to beginning construction such as project design and acquisition of right-of-way - depending on the selected project and the complexity of the design, these processes could take an additional 2-3 years. Due to all of these factors, the simple response to your concern is that it will be 7-10 years before a new bridge could be completed. ODOT, the City of Salem, and Polk and Marion Counties have placed a high priority on the completion of the EIS process and advancing this project toward construction.

I encourage you to stay informed on this project and continue to provide input.

10. Comment - 12/5/06 10:21 am

Are you following the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 guidelines, or is this project exempt?

Response – 12/5/06 10:11 am

Yes, we are following SAFETEA-LU 6002 guidelines on this project.

Let me know if you have any further questions.

Thanks.

9. Comment - 11/20/06 7:15 pm

When will the next bridge (or 2) be built, & why the delay?

Response – 11/29/06 8:15 am

Thank you for your question and I apologize for the delay in responding to you. We are embarking on a process to develop the federally mandated environmental impact statement (EIS) that will evaluate various alternatives for providing additional traffic carrying capacity across the Willamette River. Completion of the EIS and the selection of the preferred project is projected in Spring 2009 (the schedule for the EIS process can be found on www.salemrivercrossing.org). As part of this process, we will also be evaluating options for funding the project. Once the EIS is finished and funding for the selected alternative is secured, there are additional steps that must be completed prior to beginning construction such as project design and acquisition of right-of-way - depending on the selected project and the complexity of the design, these processes could take an additional 2-3 years. Due to all of these factors, the simple answer to your question is that it will be 7-10 years before a new bridge could be completed. ODOT, the City of Salem, and Polk and Marion Counties have placed a high priority on the completion of the EIS process and advancing this project toward construction.

I encourage you to stay informed on this project and continue to provide input. If you are available, please attend one of our community open houses scheduled for next week - either Wednesday, December 6th, 5 - 8PM at the West Salem Roth's, or Thursday, December 7th, 5 - 8PM at City Hall, Council Chambers.

8. Comment - 11/20/06 5:05 pm

I see this getting bogged down like turning the old railroad bridge into a pedestrian/bicycle route across the river, or the building of an overpass over the slough to connect Riverfront Park with Minto-Brown Park. Just because one commercial operator (the Willamette Queen captain) doesn't want, it shouldn't override the wishes of countless others that would like to see the overpass happen.

Response – 11/28/06 6:07 pm

Thank you for your interest in the Salem River Crossing project. I apologize for the delay in responding to your comment. The process that we are undertaking through the Salem River Crossing project is necessary to develop a solution to the traffic congestion across the Willamette River. This process will offer the opportunity for everyone to provide input into defining both the problem and the solution. Our project timeline is included on the web site at <http://www.salemrivercrossing.org/Schedule.aspx>.

It is important to develop broad community support for a solution, recognizing that no solution will make everyone happy. Part of the current project will be to develop a financial strategy for implementing the preferred solution - whether that is a new bridge or something else.

The ability of the community to support a financial strategy is a critical component in implementing any solution. I encourage you to stay informed on this project and continue to

provide input. If you are available, please attend one of our community open houses scheduled for next week - either Wednesday, December 6th, 5 - 8PM at the West Salem Roth's, or Thursday, December 7th, 5 - 8PM at City Hall, Council Chambers.

7. Comment - 11/11/06 11:29 am

Why doesn't the city of Salem put a moratorium on building new homes in west Salem until we get a new bridge over the Willamette? We already have too many people trying to get into downtown over the bridges we have every day.

Response – 11/15/06 3:13 pm

Thank you for your interest in the Salem River Crossing Project. You asked why Salem doesn't put a moratorium on building new homes in west Salem. State law governs when and how local governments can impose a moratorium on construction or land development. These laws can be found in Oregon Revised Statutes, Chapter 197.505 to 197.530. These laws limit the reasons a city can impose a moratorium, and limit the length of time a moratorium may be in place. Moratoria are primarily intended to address immediate threats to public health and safety. The maximum time limit a moratorium may be imposed is 6 months - with a maximum of 3 6-month extensions allowed. It is not likely that a moratorium could be justified based on either current or future predicted traffic volumes in the West Salem area. In addition, a moratorium requires a corrective plan - i.e., a plan to correct the problem creating the moratorium. After the corrective plan is adopted, the moratorium must be lifted after the 6-month period and any extensions have passed, even if the corrective plan has not yet been completed.

The environmental process we are currently working on is an important step to correct the traffic problems in West Salem, but we have not yet identified what the appropriate solution is as required by federal and state regulations. This will happen over the course of this project.

Part of the Salem River Crossing Project will be to develop a funding strategy. Once a preferred alternative is adopted, we will need to move forward with implementing the funding strategy to be able to start final design, right-of-way purchases, and construction.

Please let me know if I can provide further information on the Salem River Crossing Project.

6. Comment - 11/2/06 6:34 pm

Hi all, Today (Nov. 2) I wanted to try the public survey, but it said it was closed. Is this a temporary, or is it closed for good? There was no information on why it's closed

Response – 11/3/06 9:30 am

Thanks for your comment and interest in the survey. Unfortunately, you missed the closing date, by one day. You brought up a good point, that the grey box saying the "survey is closed," does not provide enough information. I have updated the survey page alerting readers that the survey closed on November 1st and that a new survey will be available in December.

Also, we are in the process of compiling the survey results and will be sharing that information within the next month. Please let me know if you have any other questions or comments. Thank you

5. Comment – 10/31/06 11:05 am

Today is the first time that I have ever seen the Polk County Commission put the Salem River Crossing Project on their published agenda. Is there some reason (other than the current election) that the Salem River Crossing is being listed in their public agenda for the first time?

Response – 11/8/06 5:06 pm

Thank you for your interest in the Salem River Crossing project. The question you asked regarding this being on the 10/31/06 agenda of the Polk County Board of Commissioners was forwarded to me. I went to the Polk County web site and excerpted the paragraph below from their minutes. Part of the federal Environmental Impact Statement process requires that the federal agency formally invite federal, state, and local agencies to be either "participating" or "cooperating" agencies.

This item was on their agenda to discuss their receipt of this letter. Please let me know if I can provide additional information - you can either contact me directly, or go through our project web site.

Excerpt from Polk County Board of Commissioners 10/31/06 minutes:

SALEM RIVER CROSSING PROJECT

Mike said that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is cooperating on the Salem River Crossing Project and Polk County has been asked to be a participating agency. He said that a participating agency has no authority whereas a cooperating agency does. He said that counties have the right, under Federal law, to be cooperating agencies if they request that. He suggested that we send a letter to ODOT making that request. Ron agreed.

4. Comment – 10/27/06 9:46 am

I am a stay at home West Salem mom who shuttles two kids to South Salem for 2 different schools. Three times a week I travel after school to Keizer for activities. I travel the bridges several times a day. I dread having to return home only to leave again at the 5 PM hour. Wallace Street is a mess at that time (and 8 AM). Normal commute is 3 minutes from Orchard Heights to downtown. With traffic, make that 15 minutes...slow on Wallace, the bridge exits (especially heading north to Keizer) I think the Salem Parkway should be extended to Wallace (or a feeder road yet to be built). Removing the northern trips from the bridges would be great time saver. Salem Parkway seems already designed to handle the traffic to Keizer and I5. Unfortunately, this would also speed up growth in West Salem...something we really would like to see slow down until there is the proverbial "master plan". Until the bridges are built, let's get the local radio stations to broadcast better road info and more frequently when there is trouble on the bridges. That way, we'll find a friend's house or go shopping to keep from having potty accidents while waiting and waiting to move in traffic accidents or jumpers.

Response – Not requested

3. Comment – 10/17/06 4:12 pm

Please send several copies of the newsletter to me at . . . If you have an electronic version of the newsletter that is helpful too.

As the chairperson for the Salem Land Use Network I would like to invite you or someone on your staff to attend one of our meetings to give a report to our members. The group is made up of all the land use chairs for each of Salem's 19 neighborhood associations. We meet on the last Wednesday of the month from 6 - 7:30 p.m. at Salem City Hall room 205. We will not meet in December, but the October and November agendas are still open for presentations. They close the around the 19 of each month, however.

I will refer your request for mailing addresses to Salem Community Services and see if you can piggy back on an existing Mailing to our board members.

Thank you for keeping me in the loop.

Response - 10/24/06 11:16 am

Your email to the Salem River Crossing web site was forwarded to me as the City project manager for this project. I would be happy to attend one of the Land Use Network meetings, however at this point I would need to request Wed. January 31st (the last Wed. in January). We have a Task Force meeting for the Salem River Crossing project on the evening of November 29th that conflicts with your Land Use Network meeting. We will be holding open houses during early December, and we will send out announcements of those in advance with the newsletter. Please let me know if January will work for your agenda. Thanks.

2. Comment – 10/19/06 2:58 pm

I would greatly appreciate it if you would put me on your notification list for updates and schedules for the subject project. Thank you very much.

Response – 10/23/06 9:44 am

Thank you for your interest in the Salem River Crossing project. Your contact information has been added to our mailing list and we will keep you informed of updates to the project. Have a great day,

1. Comment – 10/13/06 9:09 am

Is the citizen's forum on Nov 8? Where, when, time? Please advise ASAP

Response – 10/16/06 3:17 pm

Your question submitted via the project website regarding the date for our first public open house (citizen forum) was forwarded to me. The short answer is that the public open

houses will not be held in November and at this point we hope to reschedule them for the first week of December.

The Project Management Team has reevaluated the timing of the open houses relative to some important new NEPA legal notification requirements that we must comply with. Working with FHWA, we are developing a new schedule for the open houses that we anticipate will not delay the overall project schedule. We feel that this change in timing of the open houses will provide more content to share and obtain feedback from the general public.

Thanks for your question and your interest.