



## Comments given to the Task Force

DATE: October 17, 2007

### 2007

#### Mailed Comment – 08/02/2007

Dear Sirs,

Would it be possible that a new bridge to be considered approximately in the location as shown on enclosed map? The property should be purchased before a developer gets into the act.

#### Mailed Comment – 09/15/2007

I understand that you provide some of the staff assistance to the Salem River Crossing Task Force. I write to make a suggestion on the location and form of a bridge and its access. Please read my proposal and consider passing it on to the task force. From the reports rye read, my input is not too late in that the bridge options under consideration do not eliminate this idea.

The reports suggest that if there is to be a bridge recommended, a bridge north of the existing bridges is the most likely recommendation. My proposal is in agreement with a location north of the existing bridges as a first step. I fear, however, that a single bridge is inadequate to resolve the situation on any long-term basis. I propose that a recommendation be made for a more comprehensive approach, similar to what the City of Eugene began with its northern Beltline.

I see the beginning of an approach like Eugene's in the Salem Parkway between Keizer and Salem. I propose that an extension to the Salem Parkway be recommended that will tie in with a northern bridge site. That bridge would not simply "dump" traffic onto Wallace Road. There would be access to and from Wallace Road, but the thoroughfare would continue on through the hills of West Salem and connect up with Highway 22 somewhere between College Drive and Doakes Ferry Road. There should also be access to other West Salem streets that intersect with the thoroughfare.

I suggest an approximate location of the connection to Highway 22 so that a future expansion of the thoroughfare would work to include southern Salem via another bridge. The southern part of the thoroughfare would tie in with an arterial such as Kuebler Blvd. The entirety of a thoroughfare that included such northern and southern arteries connected to Highway 22 via their bridges would provide a route around the core Salem area. The only existing route contains the bottleneck of the existing bridges. Given the routes that currently exist, I believe this proposal would provide the most benefit to all area residents, while

sharing the burdens.

I wish the hills of West Salem had not been covered by house construction. However, after housing had pushed so far in other directions, building in West Salem became more desirable. I'd rather not see the kind of thoroughfare I propose running through the hills of West Salem. Unfortunately, it is a viable option so it would be amiss of me to not suggest it. Salem recently overtook Eugene as the second-most populous city in Oregon. A method of routing traffic similar to what Eugene began years ago would improve transportation throughout Salem.

### Mailed Comment – 08/20/2007

At its August 15, 2007 Board of Directors meeting, Marion County Farm Bureau discussed the subject of an additional bridge across the Willamette in the Salem area.

It was the consensus of the Board that the Pine Street location would be the best option available. We continue to feel that a bridge farther to the south would be best although very costly, i.e., Mission St. We would appreciate that the engineers study to provide the least amount of turns and a more straight on approach connecting I-5 to the West Salem area. The Market Street option would do this; however, it doesn't seem to change the traffic overload problem.

Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on this subject.

### Comment – 10/10/2007 4:58 PM

I would like the following to become part of the public record for the Salem River Crossing Task Force:

We are a country in decline. We are conducting an expensive, internationally unpopular war in Iraq. The dollar has recently reached a record low relative to the Euro. We have record national debt that's growing. America's economy is not as globally dominant as it once was. At the same time, the economies of China and India are rapidly expanding.

Peak oil is imminent. Consensus among experts worldwide is that we have already reached or are about to reach peak oil in the world. That means the amount of oil readily available for use is beginning to decline. The rapid build-up of interest in ethanol is a clear indicator that we face a future with less readily available energy.

In a capitalist economy, supply is balanced by demand through price. The price of oil is rising rapidly at the same time our buying power is sinking.

The climate is in crisis. Argument over the reality of global warming has receded to disputing individual facts, not the reality itself. The cost of polluting fossil fuels is increasing the threats to our forests and watersheds, our cropland and our very existence.

In the recent showing of "The End of Suburbia" at the Salem Progressive Film Series, we were offered a harsh look at a reality we are increasingly likely to face in our cities and neighborhoods. Our traditional American way of life is heavily dependent on inexpensive energy in limitless abundance.

How do all of these things relate to the task at hand? A new bridge over the Willamette River in the Salem area represents a nexus of these forces and our inability to comprehend what they mean to each of us as citizens. Our way of life is being transformed. The way we have lived will not continue unchanged.

The studies upon which your bridge recommendation will be based predict that the population of West Salem will nearly double between 2005 and 2030, with smaller but significant population increases in Dallas and Monmouth-Independence. The implication is that large new volumes of cars, each containing the national average of slightly more than one occupant, will need to cross the Willamette River on the Center and Marion Street bridges.

It's assumed in this study, without formal acknowledgement, that growth of that kind is both desirable and inevitable. It further assumes that our accustomed way of life will continue unchanged for at least 23 years and probably well beyond.

It's best to let our West Salem neighbors answer whether or not a near doubling of population there is desirable. They will live at the center of that growth.

The inevitability of rapid growth in West Salem is a different matter. Even if our leaders are unwilling or unable to choose livability over growth, simple economic forces are highly likely to limit growth. As the facts stated above suggest, it's hard to imagine our historical way of life continuing indefinitely. It's much more likely that through a gradual transition, our individual trips in one-occupant vehicles will decline significantly, perhaps even dramatically, as the costs of heating our homes and feeding our families demands more and more of our shrinking purchasing power.

Imagine what it might be like when driving to work consumes a major portion of your daily wages. You may already face that reality. Will you be dreaming of a wonderful life in the country when it means a longer commute to work and a significant reduction in your buying power?

You're more likely to think about carpooling or mass transit as alternatives to driving alone. Better yet, you might begin to see the exceptional value of living in close proximity to your workplace.

The City of Salem's Vision2020 is a view to a very realistic and sustainable alternative. It's a very good start. The area north of the downtown core being considered for bridge abutments, high-volume traffic corridors and the resulting concrete ghetto could be turned into a high-quality, high-density housing and business mix. In fact, that's already happening with the development of the YWCA's facility.

The downtown core is easily accessible from that area, without a need for automobile trips. Vibrant businesses in the downtown core are dependent on large volumes of people within easy traveling distance. The Grant and Highland neighborhood districts are the key. They also boast a highly desirable riverfront well out of the floodplain. There are currently half-million dollar houses at the terminus of some of the proposed bridge alternatives. These houses have backyards opening onto the Willamette Greenway. Wild geese arrive, uninvited, in park-like backyards at these homes. The riverfront between Keizer and the abandoned railroad bridge has the potential to be the most desirable area in all of Salem.

Many cities in America have realized the overriding value of their downtown riverfronts and developed them in ways that vault them to the top of the chart. Boise and San Antonio are among the finest examples.

The Grant and Highland districts have the potential to turn Salem into a jewel of a city. That's a vision worth pursuing.

A new bridge is a means of moving people out of the downtown area, away from the business core, away from any sense of community. It's a questionable attempt to continue a lifestyle that can no longer be considered sustainable. It's a bridge to the past, a bridge for a lifestyle that's fading away, not a bridge to the future.