Salem River Crossing Project
Draft Statement of Purpose and Need
(as approved by Oversight Team on 11/21/06)

Project Purpose

The proposed action would improve mobility and safety for people and freight for local, regional, and through travel ~~to and~~ across the Willamette River in the Salem-Keizer metropolitan area while alleviating~~minimizing~~ congestion on the Marion and Center Street bridges and on the connecting highway and arterial street systems.

Project Need Statements

- Improve existing and future ~~vehicle~~ mobility and safety of passenger vehicles
- Improve existing and future ~~freight~~ mobility and safety of freight vehicles
- Improve existing and future ~~public transportation~~ reliability of public transportation
- Improve existing and future ~~pedestrian and bicycle~~ mobility and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists
- Minimize traffic disruptions and enable emergency vehicle response in the event of restricted access to and/or closure of~~to~~ the existing bridges ~~is restricted or closed~~ due to an emergency or other incident
- Develop a financial~~ly feasible~~ strategy~~solution~~ for implementation

Supporting information for the needs to be addressed by the proposed action includes the following.

Project Need Statements	Background / Details
Improve existing and future ~~vehicle~~ mobility and safety of passenger vehicles	**Increasing congestion across the river has negatively affected vehicle mobility and safety for local, regional, and through trips. Travel demands are expected to increase in the future, which will further deteriorate vehicle mobility and safety on the bridges.** The Marion and Center Street bridges are among the most critical transportation links in Salem. A little over half of the bridge traffic (54 percent) originates in West Salem, indicating that the bridges are a critical link not only between West Salem and the remainder of Salem but also for regional travel within the Willamette Valley. Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on the two bridges is 84,400, higher than the ADT on I-5 at Market Street. Local trips (within the Salem-Keizer urban area), regional trips (between the urban area and outside the urban area), and through trips (originating from a point outside the urban area, through the urban area, ending at another point outside the urban area) represent the three major types of travel demand across the bridges. The region's growing population and employment has increased travel demand across the river. Between 1995 and 2004, the average annual growth in ADT on the bridges was 1.8 percent. Performance at key intersections is at or exceeds state or local mobility standards. Existing afternoon peak hour traffic exceeds capacity at the Commercial Street/Marion Street, Front Street/Center Street, Liberty Street/Ferry Street intersections in downtown Salem, and the Wallace Road/Glen Creek Road intersection in West Salem. Afternoon peak period traffic volumes are forecasted to double by 2030, which will increase the duration of the peak period considerably. The adopted Oregon Highway Plan mobility standard for the bridges is a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.80. Year 2030 volume-to-capacity ratios for the bridges are forecasted to be 1.07 eastbound and 1.66 westbound during the afternoon peak hour, with approximately 300 vehicle hours of delay, indicating significantly congested conditions. Without additional transportation capacity across the river, the mobility and safety conditions on the bridge system and the connecting infrastructure east and west of the river will continue to deteriorate over time. Increasing congestion has negatively affected safety conditions on the bridges. The 5-year average crash rate on the Center Street Bridge is more than two times higher than the average statewide crash rate. A majority of crashes were rear-end property damage only crashes, indicating congested conditions.

Project Need Statements	Background / Details
Improve existing and future ~~freight~~ mobility and safety of freight vehicles	**Increasing congestion across the river has negatively affected freight mobility and safety for local, regional, and through trips. Travel demands are expected to increase in the future, which will further deteriorate freight mobility and safety on the bridges.** Truck mobility and circulation across the bridges is critical to the local, regional, and state economy. The existing bridges are designated as Freight Routes in the Oregon Highway Plan and Regional Freight Roadways in the Regional Transportation System Plan, which recognize their importance to serve as an access and circulation route for the delivery of goods and services into, out of, and within the Salem-Keizer urban area. Truck trips accounted for 4.3 percent of traffic flow across the bridges in 2005. Because of the region's growing population and employment, freight travel demand across the river has increased an average of 1.8 percent per year between 1995 and 2004. High traffic levels are resulting in increasing levels of delay. The efficiency of freight movement on the bridges is jeopardized by increasing congestion. Performance at key intersections is at or exceeds state or local mobility standards, and existing afternoon peak hour traffic exceeds capacity at several intersections. Therefore, there is a need to maintain and improve the efficiency of freight movement across the river. Increasing congestion has negatively affected safety conditions for trucks on the bridges and afternoon peak period traffic volumes are forecasted to double by 2030, which will increase the duration of the peak period considerably. For more information, see the previous background/details column for the previous need statement.
Improve existing and future ~~public transportation~~ reliability of public transportation	**Existing afternoon congestion negatively affects transit service reliability across the river today. Congestion is forecasted to get worse in the future.** Existing afternoon congestion negatively affects transit service reliability between West Salem and the remainder of Salem. During afternoon and early evening hours, 36 percent of the trips on Cherriots Route 25 (connecting West Salem and downtown Salem) are more than 5 minutes late as a result of congestion. Because this route is also dependent upon transfers from other routes, schedule adjustments to account for congestion on the bridges cannot easily be made. Afternoon peak hour congestion is forecasted to double by Year 2030. With no other options to cross the river in the Salem area, congestion will occur over a longer periods of the day. The reliability of existing and any planned improvements to transit

Project Need Statements	Background / Details
	service between West Salem and the remainder of Salem will be negatively affected by increased congestion, which will negatively affect transit ridership across the river.
Improve existing and future ~~pedestrian and bicycle~~ mobility and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists	**The existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities across the bridges are minimally adequate or sub-standard, and connections to and from downtown are indirect and unmarked.** Existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the Marion and Center Street bridges are minimally adequate and in some cases sub-standard. Improvements to these facilities would make walking and bicycling more feasible travel options in Salem. The planned conversion of the Union Street Railroad bridge to a pedestrian and bicycle facility will only partially address these needs. The primary pedestrian and bicycle facility across the river is a two-way 10-foot wide barrier-separated concrete path on the north side of the Center Street Bridge. ODOT standards for a two-way multi-use facility with barriers on both sides call for a minimum 14-foot width. Best practices recommend placement of the path further from the roadway. The Marion Street Bridge has a 5-foot sidewalk on the north side of the bridge separated from traffic lanes by a railing and no on-street bicycle facilities. This width is significantly below standards (see above) and as a result may present safety hazards to users, such as from two-way or mixed pedestrian-bicycle traffic. Pedestrian and bicyclist connections to and from the bridges are unmarked and indirect. On the east side, the two ramps from the barrier-separated path on the Center Street Bridge terminate at Front Street and Water Street and do not provide direct connections to the downtown Salem street system. The west side connection at the Wallace Road intersection is indirect and awkward, in particular for users traveling to and from the west side of Wallace Road.
Minimize traffic disruptions and enable emergency vehicle response in the event of restricted access to and/or closure of~~to~~ the existing bridges ~~is restricted or closed~~ due to an emergency or other incident	**Limited options to cross the river require long detours should either bridge be closed. Past events have closed one or both bridges causing traffic disruptions for emergency response, vehicles, and freight.** The Marion and Center Street bridges are critical east-west transportation links for local travel, regional travel, and emergency vehicle response. The bridges are designated by Polk County as Priority 1 Lifeline Routes, which means they are considered essential for emergency vehicle response during the first 72 hours after an event. Within the Salem-Keizer urban area, there are no parallel connections across the Willamette River to function as an

Project Need Statements	Background / Details
	emergency response route. Past emergencies and other events have closed one or both bridges causing traffic disruptions for vehicles and freight. The only hospital in the Salem-Keizer urban area, the City of Salem Police Department, and nine of the ten City of Salem fire stations are located east of the river. Should either bridge be restricted or closed due to an emergency or other event, there are limited options requiring long detours. The next nearest bridge across the river requires an approximately 25-mile detour south to Independence via OR 51 and River Road South. The nearest bridge across the river to the north is an approximately 60-mile detour through Dayton, Dundee, and Newberg. The Wheatland Road Ferry northwest of Keizer, an approximately 30-mile detour and the Buena Vista Ferry south of Independence, an approximately 40-mile detour, are other river crossing options, provided the ferries are operating. The Wheatland Road Ferry operates 16 hours per day year-round, except holidays and times of high river flow (16 feet or higher). The Buena Vista Ferry only operates 5 days a week, 10 hours per day April through October.
Develop a financial~~ly feasible~~ strategy~~solution~~ for implementation	**Major bridges are critical links in the transportation system and are expensive to construct and maintain. A funding plan must be in place before any river crossing solution is constructed. Existing funding sources are not adequate to pay for anticipated project costs.** Costs for major transportation projects are frequently funded with a mix of federal, state, and local funds. Existing funding sources are not adequate to pay for anticipated project costs. Therefore, public-private partnerships and user fees are potential sources of funding for this project. Federal and state regulations require that long-range regional transportation plans exhibit "financial constraint," meaning funding must be available to adequately maintain and operate existing transportation facilities and services before calling for the expenditure of resources to expand those systems. Plans must also identify which improvement projects can be implemented using existing and "reasonably anticipated" funding, and which projects require the development of new revenue sources. If new revenue sources are required, a plan must present the actions to be taken to acquire the new funding. A funding plan must be in place before any river crossing solution proposed in the Environmental Impact Statement will be approved for construction.